成田良悟
Ryohgo Narita
デュラ
11
電撃文庫

Durarara Volume 10

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Prologue

Excerpt from Tsukumoya Shinichi's "Closed Blog"

Let's talk about Kujiragi Kasane.

She is helplessly an assailant but also a victim.

Of course, she should not be an assailant because she is a victim; she has an existence that should be judged by humans as being a criminal.

Of course I had a reason why I said by humans.

Kujiragi Kasane.

That's not her real name, but it can make the story complicated if I use her old name. So let me call her Kujiragi Kasane in the post of this blog.

She may or may not be a human.

Precisely speaking, her mother has an existence that is a bit different than humans.

A fairy?

A monster?

An evil spirit?

A devil?

I can guarantee that she is not an angel but it doesn't matter what she is.

Anyway, Kujiragi Kasane was born from “something” different from a human and a human male.

However, I don’t need to talk about the story of her mother a lot here.

Let some vermin who smells like blood talk about that kind of story.

In any case, she has blood that is not quite human.

And although she is one generation apart, she is of the same blood as Hijiribe Ruri.

Yes. In order words, Kujiragi Kasane and Hijiribe Ruri are relatives. Ruri-chan’s mother and Kasane’s mother are step sisters. In short, Ruri-chan is the niece of Kujiragi.

Do you think it’s weird?

Kujiragi doesn’t look like she’s that old, right?

Well, that’s because of her mother’s blood, but actually she’s not that old. Although her mother is the step sister of Hijiribe Ruri’s mother, they were twenty years apart.

Well, let’s leave out the explanation about aged women giving birth.

Kujiragi Kasane.

To cut to the chase, a long time ago she was sold. Right after she was born.

That old lady Hijiribe Ruri did such and such with someone right after she left home and she sold the daughter that she had as a result to an old guy named

Yodogiri Jinnai.

That's a story where we can doubt her as a mother.

Well, there may be a reason but I don't know about it. Since it happened a long time ago.

Anyway, she was taught how to do business although she was young by that old guy Yodogiri. She probably got Saika around that time.

Then after the old guy died, she conveniently kept using the name of Yodogiri Jinnai. While she's using a suitable substitute for him.

The days she's exploiting the person and "monster" as "Yodogiri Jinnai". That's her life.

It's not like she wished for that.

She just did not know any other way to live.

She probably had a talent. If she keeps continuing the way she lives, she wouldn't be unable to eat. On the contrary, a life other than that and Kujiragi from her childhood would have no choice but to starve herself and die.

She was sold by her mother and had her personality destroyed by Yodogiri Jinnai and became the type of person she is.

If we were to call Orihara Izaya "evil by nature", Kujiragi would be a "miscreant created by people".

That is the reason why I said she is an assailant and a victim at the same time in the beginning.

Having said that, naturally, the things she has been doing are not acceptable. That's exactly what I wrote in the beginning.

And regarding Hijiribe Ruri, she might have some kind of personal emotion more or less.

Think about it.

The woman who has the same blood as herself following her dream and leading a marvelous life.

You wouldn't be surprised if she wants to control her, right? To the direction of hell.

Suppose that Kujiragi still has human-like emotions such as jealousy.

I certainly know many things and I am educated more than the ordinary person.

However, I cannot read people's minds and I cannot read monster's minds either.

If you look from edge to edge in the world, there may be a person who has ESP who can read people's mind as if they are seeing it, but at least that's not me.

Therefore I cannot even imagine.

I don't what Kujiragi, whose "shackles" named Yodogiri Jinnai have been destroyed, will do next.

She now is completely free from Yodogiri Jinnai.

While having the "power" of Yodogiri Jinnai.

Freedom.

If in the future, Kujiragi, who enjoyed the freedom, changes her mind while crying and decides to live a life for people……. I think that is the best but the chances are slim.

There is only one thing I can tell you, who was able to visit this blog.

As much as possible, be careful not to be squeezed of your blood….

Chapter 4 - I’ll Scratch your Back if you Scratch Mine

Part 1

SNS service Twittia

Kisshii: Gas mask now

Kisshii: The air which I'm breathing through the gas mask is fresh

Kisshii: However, I don't know what to tweet although my account is private because my son told me to do so

Kisshii: However it depends on what I'm thinking. Now that my account is private and I have zero followers, that means nobody else except me can see the words I wrote in this place

Kisshii: In short, I have freedom

Kisshii: Although it's online, this is the real freedom I have been looking for!

Kisshii: No, wait, I haven't looked for freedom that much

Kisshii: However, here in this place I can say whatever I want

Kisshii: On top of that, if nobody can see this, I can use this as a very useful diary

Kisshii: As long as you have internet access, you can check it from anywhere on the earth

Kisshii: I can tweet my secrets as much as I want. This is like a cave that I can put all of my secrets inside

Kisshii: Nebula currently is pulling a large amount of underground money under the name of "entertainment expenses"

Kisshii: But the right way to use this money is for "entertainment expenses"

Kisshii: Anyway, it is used to socialize with "something that is not human"

Kisshii: The department I belong to at Nebula is looking for something beyond humans that are missing but not announced in public

Kisshii: The Headless Rider that is currently making a scene in Ikebukuro is one of our research objects

Kisshii: It's a very stupid that other departments are researching fishy objects such as "immortals" and "immortality elixir". It's impossible to think that there are immortal humans, let alone "evil spirits" existing in this world

Kisshii: That's a lie, I know they exist. You never know, vampires might exist too, you know? There is a report that the former chairman of Garudasutansu Group, that is the competition of Nebula, is a vampire

Kisshii: …..And so on, although nobody will read this

Kisshii: Despite that this connects you to the world, nobody can see this….

Kisshii: I wonder if exhibitionists who walk around naked in the dark feel this way

Kisshii: Haha….. If my account were public, I would be punished by Nebula for leaking their confidential secrets

Kisshii: What a thrill. It feels good to be just one step away

Kisshii: Imagine if I accidentally switch my account from private to public, I couldn't sleep.

Kisshii: Well, since I didn't show my real name and from just this content, people would probably think it's just a reckless remark by a crazy person

Kisshii: However, what a wonderful era we have

Kisshii: Seas of information are spread all over the world by the internet

Kisshii: It's like brain cells interacting with each other via the synapse

Kisshii: I wouldn't be surprised if some kind of superior existence that control humans as their brains appear

Kisshii: Well, if I say these remarks in front of other scientist friends, they would laugh very hardly

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii Unexpectedly, they might have already appeared

Kisshii: Who is this?!

Kisshii: My account should be private!

Kisshii: I'm sorry, I will pay you so please forgive me!

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii It's me, Tsukumoya. It's been a while Kishitani-san

Kisshii: Oh, Tsukumoya-kun

Kisshii: If it's you, it's a bit of a relief but I have a private life

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii Sorry. Shingen-san rarely shows up online

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii I have something I wanted to tell you

Kisshii: I will not ask you why you can talk to me on my private account when I have no follower relationships right now. Sounds like nothing is impossible for you.

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii I can't do anything that cannot be done online

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii I am not a deus ex machina

Kisshii: Wait a second. You can put furigana on this Twittia service?!

(see translator's note 1)

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii Of course not. (In furigana: What are you talking about, this furigana?)

Kisshii: Stop being annoying in dual meanings!

Kisshii: That's fine, then what do you want?

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii Yagiri Seitarou-san and them have started to move to capture Namie-san

Kisshii: I see

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii It seems like they are somehow looking for Celty's head

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii I know I don't need to worry about this but I just wanted to tell you

Kisshii: I see. Anyway I appreciate the information

Kisshii: But I have been wondering from before, why are you helping us?

Kisshii: I can't come up with a reason why a man like you is involved with just one side

Tsukkuu: Because I am a member of the Dollars…. is what I wish I could say, but lately the Dollars haven't been appealing to me

Kisshii: Who the hell's side are you on?

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii I'm on the side of the people who love this city

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii Whether it's human or something else

Kisshii: I see. If that's the case, I won't say anything. Please keep your love

Kisshii: If it's possible, I would appreciate if you stay away from my private life

Tsukkuu: @Kisshii That’s impossible

Kisshii: …..

Part 2

The past　In front of Namie's apartment

Yagiri Namie was having a life crisis.

"You don't know how to speak, Namie."

She was surrounded by Kujiragi Kasane and her uncle, Yagiri Seitarou, in front of her apartment building.

"……"

It is not her own life crisis. No, in some way, her life is in danger, but for Namie, her life is not worth describing as having a life crisis.

"Seiji will hate you if you speak so aggressively, yeah? Of course Seiji can only see 'the head.'"

The existence of Yagiri Seiji—- her younger brother, is everything to her.

However, if I were captured here, I will lose a way to save Seiji.

Above all, it's not acceptable that Seiji is in danger because of me—— is being taken advantage of by kidnapping in order to control me.

In that meaning, it can be said that everything in her life is facing a crisis.

Seitarou talked in a cold tone to Namie, who was blocked by Kujiragi and held in a dead end.

"Don't worry. I am not thinking of killing you."

However, he gives a signal to the men wearings suits that surrounded him while looking at them with cold hearted eyes and sending the message that he is not granting her freedom either.

Namie tried to resist but cannot move her hands and legs, probably because of the surprise from the electric shock.

The next moment she was about to be dragged and taken by the men wearing the black suits——

Help suddenly showed up.

“That’s enough!”

As soon as the mumbled voice echoed all over, one white shadow appears from the shadow of the wall and becomes like a wind and approaches the men that held Namie.

“!?”

Seitarou opened up his eyes in surprise to the sudden intruder—- the next moment he noticed the white shadow was actually a white robe and said a name.

“Kishitani….!?”

Kishitani Shingen.

His childhood friend, business partner in dealing with the “head”, and researcher who belongs to “Nebula”, the foreign founded enterprise that acquired Yagiri Pharmaceuticals.

And now, the man who is his enemy.

He looked at the white gas mask that he was wearing and shouted almost convinced——

By looking at the sharp movement, his certainty was shaken.

As far as Seitarou knows, Kishitani Shingen is not a man who can run that fast, let alone it would be impossible that Shingen could beat the men wearing black in one moment—- that I am seeing right now.

"…."

Kujiragi steps ahead and tries to fight back against the man in the gas mask.

She tried to shoot him down by giving the man who was rushing towards her while lowering his body a kick with her knee.

However, the man in the gas mask kicks the ground one moment before and soars into the air.

It seemed like he would attack Kujiragi like that, but he kicked a car that was parked right next to them and passed Kujiragi—— he gave a sharp kick with his toe to the chin of the man wearing black who was holding Namie from behind.

The man in the white robe takes Namie's body from the man wearing black who fainted, and looks back towards Kujiragi.

"Your presence…."

Kujiragi murmured something at the man without showing any facial expression.

However, the matter was shot down by the mumbled voice that echoed from the same place as before.

“That’s enough!”

It was the same voice and the same remark as before.

When everyone looks towards the voice—- there is a man standing there.

He was wearing the same clothes as the man who rescued Namie; that is a white gas mask and white robe.

Somehow it looks like the man who has been shouting is different from the saved Namie just now.

“Fuhahaha…. I made it on time. I should have a safety net around Namie-kun.”

“…..Kishitani…..Shingen?”

Although Namie has not completely recovered from the electric shock, she frowns by hearing the voice of the man in the gas mask.

“That guy…. and that guy…. peeping at people….. that’s a bad hobby.”

“Is this a remark coming from someone working for Orihara Izaya?”

The man in the gas mask who is holding Namie answered with that.

Namie takes a closer look at him and realizes that the shape of the gas mask is slightly different from Shingen’s and she can spontaneously tell it is a different person.

However, she replied in an unfriendly way to a man who she met for the very first time without being upset.

“Yes. That guy probably has the worst hobby in the world. What’s the matter

with that?”

“Excuse me.”

The guy in the gas mask shrugged.

Part 3

Namie assumes that the man is a foreigner from the slight accent that could be heard although he speaks fluent Japanese.

However she doesn't have much time to think about it any further.

Still, there is an existence of an "obstacle" named Kujiragi Kasane right in front of her eyes.

"Then how are you planning to get out of this situation? I will pay you back later as much as you like for saving me, so can you just let me know your plan in advance?"

On the other hand, Kujiragi is not carelessly attacking us.

She probably had judged that she is not someone who she could easily stop from seeing her previous move.

But Seitarou was about to give Kujiragi an order to take Namie back while grinding his teeth.

In that moment——

"What are you doing? I don't care how you do it, just get rid of that person ——-"

His mouth, which wasn't finished talking, blew away five meters along with his body.

The third white shadow that stood behind Seitarou without making any sound attacked him from behind as if he were nailing his back.

Although the strength of his attack seems like it would make him dislocate his

shoulder bone if he were to hold his arm——-

It didn't aim to have that effect; the attack that was simply to "blow him away from his spot" transformed the corporate president into the kind of tumbleweed that can be seen in Western dramas as it planned.

After being blown away, Seitarou rolled over on the ground and crashed into the wall like that.

Seitarou's eyes were unfocused and he probably had bitten his tongue or cheek in the middle of it as blood was running down from his mouth.

Kujiragi, who had probably thought she was at a disadvantage by looking at the new intruder, changed her fight from an ambush attack to Seitarou's rescue.

While Seitarou was getting up to be helped by her, he looked—— right next to Namie, who seemed to have recovered to the point that she can stand up on her own, three men in gas masks lined up and their upper bodies moved in a circle like some male idol groups in the entertainment industry.

"Fuwahahaha, Seitarou, you look confused because I split into three people. But this is not the end. My clones will increase to the same number of human's desires and, in the end, the earth will be dyed the color of me."

"….gu…..ga…."

Whether Seitarou is hearing Shingen's bullshit or not, he gave a strong look at the three men in the gas mask after he spit out blood from his mouth.

"What… do you mean….?"

Then the man who was standing in front of the three men in the gas masks stops moving and answers while straightening his posture.

“Well, well, a person like you forgot about the contract? I have told you before in regards to my son’s case. That I would punch you. Then you agreed with me if it’s only one punch.

Part 4

“Don’t mess around! It wasn’t you, someone else did it! And besides, I allowed you to punch me but I never gave you permission to kick me!”

Shingen told Seitarou, who was shouting while spitting out saliva with blood, while shaking his neck, “That’s a pretty interesting assumption but do you have any proof?”

“It’s understandable that you misunderstood my punch for being a kick because my Nebula punch was so powerful.”

“That doesn’t matter! But what made you interrupt us?”

“Well well, how come I have to tell you my intention….? You might have been full of yourself, haven’t you? Human beings are not your slaves. People grow up when they overcome things that they cannot control. You think so too, don’t you? Kujiragi Kasane-kun?”

Kujiragi frowned for a while after he said the sudden remarks in the end——

“I don’t think it’s necessary to answer that question. For what reason do I have to answer your question?”

“I will give you 10000 yen.”

The man in the gas mask who was behind Shingen muttered refreshingly from those words.

“That’s terrible, isn’t it, Shingen-san?”

“My shadow clown, gas mask number two, shut up!”

Kujiragi thought about the offer for a while with a poker face.

After she closed her eyes for a few seconds, Kujiragi answered monotonously.

“I am afraid that it might be illegal to pay such a reward for only answering such a question that isn’t top secret. So I cannot accept such a shady offer.”

“Then how about 500 yen?”

Shingen muttered and took a 500 yen coin out of his pocket and threw it to Kujiragi.

“….Seriously, you are terrible, aren’t you?”

Gas mask number three who kicked Seitarou muttered as if he were shocked——

After Kujiragi took it with one hand, she checked to see if it wasn’t counterfeit and spoke.

“Understood. I will give you my own answer to your question.”

“Are you going to answer him!?”

Kujiragi ignored the shocked comments from gas mask number three and started to talk while holding up Seitarou.

“Surely human beings are not slaves of Mr. Yagiri Seitarou. The unreasonable reality could make him grow if could overcome it. However, if we interpret it in the wide sense of who human beings are and what rules we have or that we are slaves of our instincts, we can think that people in general are all slaves to the world.”

“Is that your own idea? Or your idea as Yodogiri Jinnai?”

Kujiragi shakes her head with an emotionless expression at Shingen, who asks in a serious tone of voice.

“I don’t understand what you’re talking about.”

“I will pay you 500 yen.”

“That’s a lecture of President Yodogiri.”

Kujiragi answers simply while catching the 500 yen coin that was thrown to her.

“What is this conversation?”

Gas mask number three muttered as if he were tired of listening to the conversation, but his voice was completely ignored and Shingen muttered as if he was talking to himself.

“I see, I see. You haven’t changed from twenty years ago. At that time, you were still a young lady…. I assumed you were a toxic substance that was not poisoned by society.”

After he said something with a profound meaning, Shingen looks towards Seitarou again.

“Well, Seitarou, it’s me who wants to know what my intentions are. Your purpose of deliberately having a business deal with Jinnai and trying to manipulate his secretary, Kujiragi-kun, has not been directly reported to the headquarters of Nebula, right?”

“I’m not obligated to….”

“You are obligated. I believe there is a line in the contract stating you’re supposed to ‘report in advance when you are dealing with matters related to the

operation even if it’s a personal matter,’ right? Of course I wrote the lines to sound like I was talking about the chemicals….. But do you understand that "Celty’s head” is one of the items that qualify?“

Part 5

Seitarou mumbled in response to Shingen's words that were spoken majestically under the gas mask while biting his lips.

Shingen keeps talking to Seitarou.

"Things are getting complicated because of you. I am not a person who is keeping an eye on you. However, because of that, I cannot deceive people when you do something suspicious."

"What are you talking about now…? The president's seat that I have is merely a stepping stone *compared to the things we have seen*."

"It's often said that the mummy hunter will become a mummy himself, but a person who kindly cannot wait for a mummy does not even have the qualification to be a mummy like you're saying. You will end up being a guy posed as a mummy that is wrapped with gauze all over his body after burning in the fire in hell."

[see translator's note 1]

"Is that coming from a man who stole the Dullahan's head by using the demon sword?"

Shingen answers the ironic words that are mixed with hatred with a calm and self possessed attitude.

"I'm already kind of a mummy. You've become someone who doesn't understand my consideration of giving you advice as a friend by saying 'don't become like me'…. Humans are such sad and empty creatures!"

Seitarou tried to scream back but he coughed while groaning, probably because he felt severe pain all over his body.

Kujiragi answers instead of him.

“I didn’t find such a consideration in the conversation we just had.”

“Hohoo… It looks like you have keen insight. Alright. I will answer you honestly out of respect for Kujiragi-kun’s great imagination although it is a stupid strategy to give my enemy information! Certainly! I just now! Said bullshit to Seitarou! Yes… I am a man who can calmly tell a lie to my old friend… In other words, I’m a bad guy! You can say I’m the worst guy in this city!”

“….”

“Then good and bad are two sides of the same coin….We can probably say they are identical existences. In short! I am allowed to call myself the very best person in the city since I am the worst bad guy in this town! How bad you guys are guys to become enemies to such a good person. So, well, let’s call it self defense that I used violence when I saved Namie-kun. Ah, I thought I would be killed by Seitarou. It was scary— Hahahahaha.”

Shingen took out something from his pocket after he said something that nobody knows how serious he was.

Around them, the men in the suits that were hit by gas mask number two just before, starts standing up and the situation is explosive.

However, right before the men in the suits completely recover—— Shingen pulls the pin of a smoke grenade that he took out from his pocket and throws it in the middle of the street.

“Fuhahahahaha, see you again Seitarou! Change your name to Akechi until next time we meet! I will proudly call myself a two faced monster then!”

[see translators note 2]

The next moment, the smoke grenade exploded——

The white smoke that hides everything around them densely spread in the corner of Shinjuku.

♂♀

translator’s note 1: this is a japanese proverb. the english equivalent is something about how the hunter himself often becomes the hunted, but since there were so many references to mummies in the conversation i left it as is.

translator’s note 2: he is referring to the character akechi in a popular mystery series. the main antagonist is called the twenty faced fiend; shingen took liberties with this and called himself two faced.

Part 6

The same day　In the evening　Shinra's apartment　Someplace on Kawagoe Street

"The next news. A friendly saltwater crocodile that is 5 meters long was found in the river in Saitama Prefecture; people are calling it Rie-chan and feeding it fresh meat——"

The gorgeous apartment on the top floor of the building.

While the sound of the large screen TV acted as background music, Celty Sturluson kept listening to the "bragging" of Kishitani Shingen.

"Well, I could save her since I'm a master of the shadow clone technique, otherwise Namie-kun would have been caught by the hoodlums and have had such and such done to her."

"I see. That's good."

Shingen, full of confidence, asks Celty who is typing words on her PDA.

"By the way, what have you imagined concretely about 'such and such'? Well, it's just a psychological test. I just want to know how much you, as a monster, are interested in the sexual emotions of humans. In short, I just want to know how far you've gone with Shinra."

Shingen's forehead was hit by a tray that was thrown from the next room that has a Japanese sliding door and he looked at the person who threw it while holding his head.

"What are you doing, Shinra! I didn't raise you to be a child who will throw a tray at your own father!"

“I didn’t raise you to be a parent that will sexually harass his son’s girlfriend!”

“Ku… I certainly don’t remember being raised by you… It is said that the child will learn from the child and the father will learn from the child but I was so busy I didn’t have time to take care of you… If this situation is the result of that, I cannot help thinking it was my fault!”

The person Shingen is looking at is Shinra who is in a wheelchair.

It looks like he cannot walk yet but he can now sit in the wheelchair with Celty’s help.

“But don’t worry about it, Shinra. Like I just told you, I went to hit the person who planned to attack you! Originally I was planning to sue this person and destroy them completely but I thought it would be a bad idea to get you or Celty-kun involved in the justice system. You should thank me for not making this into a big deal.”

“A big deal, huh?”

“You and I both exist in the darkness and shadows should just live quietly as shadows.”

Whether or not he was trying to act nihilistic, Shingen starts playing with the tray that hit his forehead.

However——

“The next news. This afternoon in the residential area of Shinjuku, something like a fuming bomb was set off and the incident where smoke spread through the area——“

Shingen heard the voice of the newscaster from the TV and dropped the tray from his fingers.

“According to the testimony of people who live nearby, a few men wearing white clothes fled from the scene—

The voice of the newscaster suddenly stops right there and switches to the sound of laughter from a comedy show.

While holding the remote control, Shingen looks up—— and he checks on his son who is looking at him with cold eyes and Celty who shows him her PDA screen that only says “….”

“In this information society, there is no longer a place you can hide… The information network has become a flashlight that can lighten up even darkness. Don’t you think this is beyond the territory of humans? The IT revolution… could be a frightening plan that transforms humans into a superior existence.”

“Don’t change the subject!”

Celty’s shadow coils around him and Shingen is tied up.

“Guooo?! Hold on, Celty-kun! You will understand if we talk! Let’s have a talkkkk.”

The person who helped him was a stranger Celty doesn’t know.

“Please hold on. It’s my fault since I provided him with the smoke grenade.”

The young man is easily recognized as a foreigner from one glance but he is speaking fluent Japanese.

“Speaking of which, I have been curious…. Who are you?”

She didn’t notice that was the “bandaid man” who she *brought somewhere before* and Celty timidly asked him.

“Excuse me. I’m Igor. I’m an old friend of Simon’s who works at Russia Sushi.”

“Simon’s?”

We can be convinced he is Russian if he says that.

However, why would Simon’s friend provide someone with a smoke grenade?

Celty was confused but she is completely used to the “confusion”.

She feels strangely calm when she talks to this foreigner who she does’t know —— it’s probably because of the other people in this room.

Part 7

Yumasaki Walker and Togusa Saburo are sitting by the window in the large room.

Although the atmosphere was relatively tense until a while ago, it turned into a pretty relaxed mood after they received a call from Karisawa saying, “Kadota is recovering and he might wake up by tomorrow.”

“Well, Kishitani-san’s father is cool. Since he’s wearing a gas mask, I wonder what his face looks like underneath. It could be half dragon or it might turn out to be a hot girl!”

“Are you saying he could be a hot girl with that low tone of voice…”

Shingen reacts to the conversation between Yumasaki and Togusa and answers them.

“Fuhahaha, if my true identity is a hot girl, I don’t mind accepting my fate…. Certainly I had swapped some clothes in the house with my ex-wife…. I mean, Shinra’s mother. That was kind of exciting.”

Celty heard the words of Shingen, who was nodding, and she quietly showed her PDA to Shinra.

“Shinra, how are you feeling after suddenly finding out your father’s fetish?”

“It would be great if you comfort me by not saying anything, Celty.”

“Don’t worry, Shinra! Since he’s not swapping their underwear, he’s not a pervert!”

“Shut up, you pervert!”

After she showed the words that were written in big letters to Shingen, Celty looked towards the other side of the room.

“Seiji, Seiji! Why don’t we swap clothes!?”

“No, it’s okay, that’s disgusting.”

“Then are you fine with me wearing your jacket without asking while relaxing, Seiji?”

“…Well, I don’t mind that kind of stuff.”

Yagiri Seiji answers as if he’s not interested in the flirting words of Harima Mika.

Then Namie who was sitting on the opposite side of Mika muttered while scrunching her forehead and grabbing Seiji’s arm.

“Well well, what is this homewrecker talking about? When Seiji was a child, he used to wear my old pajamas. Can you stop your cheap imitation?”

“Eh, those were your used pajamas, sister? But those were boy’s pajamas…”

“I wore the pajamas first so you would feel more comfortable in them, Seiji.”

Seiji replies to Namie, who mutters while blushing like a junior highschooler, without being upset or anything.

“Really? Thanks, sister.”

The multitasking Namie is smiling at Seiji while showing Mika, who was in the back, the intention to kill her.

By looking at the situation, Celty sighed deeply.

——This room is bad.

——It looks like the only normal human beings are that person named Igor and the driver of the van.

——But the person named Igor might be a person from the “underground” since he’s with Shingen.

As if she was looking for help, Celty looked at the young man with long hair
——

“Hey, Yumasaki…. Do you think it’s cheating if I buy the right to swap pajamas with Hijiribe Ruri-chan? But even if I did, I don’t think I can keep my composure the moment that right is on sale…”

——The normal person disappeared….!

While feeling devastated, Celty acted like she was sighing deeply.

However, she cannot sigh.

Instead, it was only a black shadow that moved around from the “cut surface” of her neck.

Celty Sturluson is not a human.

They hold their own severed head under their arm, ride a two wheeled horse carriage that is lead by a headless horse commonly called Koshuta Bawaa, and visit houses whose owner is almost at the end of their lives. If you carelessly open up your door, they will pour a bucket filled with blood over you—— the story has been passing down from generation to generation in Norse mythology

as well as the banshee, a representative of such a messenger of bad news.

One theory says that it is the shape of a valkyrie in Norse mythology that fell down to the earth, but actually she herself doesn't know the truth.

It is not like she doesn't know.

To be precise, she cannot remember.

She, whose "head" was stolen in her own home country, is lacking memory about her own existence.

In order to get "them" back, she followed the sign of her own neck and came to this Ikebukuro.

She has been roaming around in this city for many decades with the headless horse as her bike.

She modified her armor to a rider's suit.

However, in the end, she can neither get her head nor her memory back.

She knows who stole her head.

She also knows who prevented her from looking for her head.

But as a result she doesn't know where the head went.

Now Celty thinks that it's okay.

She can spend time with a human who she loves and who accepts her.

If she can feel this happiness, she decides to live a life as her current self.

The headless woman who holds a strong will in her heart and shows her will through her actions instead of her face that doesn't exist.

This is—— the existence called Celty Sturluson.

While Celty remembers such a position like that——

She gave her PDA to Namie who was saved by Shingen.

"'For the time being….' I have one thing I need to tell you."

"I have no reason to listen to your story. Ah, in your case, it's not listening but reading."

"….Do you know where you stand!? And what you have done to my head!"

Celty pushes the PDA like she is threatening her while making her shadow into a blur.

However, Namie responded with calm words and a poker face.

"Yeah, I know. The underground doctor who is sitting in the wheelchair over there is an accomplice to the crime."

——gu.

——If you say it like that…..

Yagiri Namie is a woman who has been researching about Celty's head for years and she was also the one who ran away with her head after the very first meeting of the Dollars. Although her attachment to her "head" is lessening, it would be a

lie if you were to say Celty had nothing she wanted to say about it at all.

However, Celty herself has no reason to hold a grudge since she was cooperating with her and trying to hide her head and she has already forgiven Shinra who did the cosmetic surgery to the face of the high school girl. If Celty were a "superhero", she could accuse Yagiri Namie of doing human experimentation but since she is connected with motorcycle gangs as a deliverer, she cannot make that accusation strongly.

"….Although I don't have that much attachment to it anymore, let me ask you just in case. Orihara Izaya owns 'my head'. That's correct, right?"

"That's something I also want to ask, sister."

Seiji sneakily peeked at the PDA and cut into the conversation.

"Seiji…."

After looking at her brother's face, Namie gave a confused look and became quiet for a while——

After a while, she sighs as if she gives up and answers while giving Celty a look.

"Yes… I gave your 'head' to that sarcastic person. Right after I ran away from you in front of Hands."

"….Right after?"

"Yeah, I think it was within twelve hours."

Celty hears her answer and clenches her fist strongly.

——That bitch.

——During the Saika incident, she asked me for 30000 yen while she left my head somewhere….

——However, at that time, I didn't feel as strong of a sign of it as the other day….

"That pervert didn't keep your head in one place. He moved it to various places and sometimes he brought it to the office and played with it and threw it around like a ball."

——That guy…. what does he think a person's head is….

Although Celty tensed her shoulders, it was Seiji who first showed his anger.

"That…. He was entertaining himself with that person like that…."

"Well, it's not that person, it's my head."

"Orihara Izaya…. I can't forgive him…."

Namie looks at Seiji, who normally doesn't show any facial expression, making a fist out of anger and she says while holding his back.

"Don't worry, Seiji. If you want to stab him, I can show you how to do it as deeply as you want. Or you don't need to get your hands dirty. I don't mind to go to jail for about fifteen years if it's for you."

"You should have a little fidelity!"

"Huh? I don't want to hear about having fidelity from a woman who stays at a human's house when you're a monster. On top of that, not from a woman who is doing illegal work as a deliverer on a bike which doesn't even have a license plate."

Celty's weak points were pointed out and her heart felt stabbed.

Shinra looked at her like that and thought, "That's why Celty is cute; instead of getting mad, she just feels down," but if he were to mention it, he was afraid she might stab him so he decides not to say anything for the time being.

After Celty paused as if she sighed deeply while she felt that Shinra was giving her a distorted look, she typed letters into the PDA powerlessly.

"….Okay. That's enough. Just in case I will say what I want and leave it here but it's not like I forgive you. I even punished Shinra properly."

"Wow. Punishment. You just punched him one time and made it ambiguous and you guys slept together dirtily later on, right? Like beasts."

"How come you know!"

Celty exposes shadows like the hot stream of a boiling kettle.

Shinra, who heard Namie's words, shouts out like he's protecting Celty.

"Namie-san, it's rude to call her a beast! In the night, Celty's pretty cute like a little rabbit, bobobo."

The shadows go inside Shinra's mouth and he starts to choke.

"Dododododo, what are you talking about?"

"Hold on, Celty-kun! What did you do with my son in the night, can you elaborate on that!"

"Shut up, you perverted father and son!"

In such a confusion, Yumasaki couldn't read the atmosphere and shouted out.

"Um, what do you mean by head? Did Izaya-san do something?"

"Ah. Well….that."

——I shouldn't have said that. I have to explain from the beginning.

"The truth is Izaya now has my head that I lost….."

"Eeeh!? Celty-san, you mean you're physically dating Kishitani-sensei and your face is dating Izaya-san!? That means you're cheating!? If you wrote about it on your blog, your blog would be on fire!?"

"Ah, no, that's not it. My head and body have different consciousnesses…"

"….Oh, you mean…."

A black sword presses against Shingen's throat who was about to say something.

"W-what are you doing, Celty-kun!? I haven't said anything…."

"I kind of get it somehow. You are about to make quite a dirty joke."

"That's stupid, what's your proof…"

From the way he obviously looked the other way, it appears that he got caught.

While she was trying to beat Shingen up with her shadow, Namie speaks in a very gloomy tone of voice.

“Yeah, that’s right. Izaya and your head loved each other.”

“What?!”

Celty looked back 180 degrees and typed something, but Namie kept talking to Seiji.

“So Seiji, I feel bad telling you, but you should give up on the girl that has such cheating tendencies. Izaya and the head have a close relationship and they talk about love every night. While her head is saying Izaya Izaya, her body is wanting the underground doctor…. Yes, that woman is such a bitch! Seiji, you don’t deserve such a lewd woman!”

“No no no no, don’t make things up!”

After she typed in a large font in order to express her emotions, Celty froze up for a second and asked again.

“…..No, that’s a lie…. Isn’t it? It’s not like only my head is waking up…. right?”

“Well, I’m not sure about that. But it’s none of your business, right?”

“Of course it’s my business!”

At the same time Celty was typing, Shinra leaned his upper body forward from the wheelchair and screamed.

“It’s none of your business, Celty! Since you gave up on your head already!”

“Eh. Ah, no. Y-yeah. I wish I could say that… but it was part of my body and I feel anxious knowing that it’s with Izaya….”

“It’s okay! No matter what challenges your head is facing, I will make you one

hundred times happier, Celty!”

“Shinra….”

Part 8

Celty showed her PDA to Shinra while feeling moved but realized something and retypes something.

“….Wait, hold on. I was about to be convinced but is this a good thing?”

“Don’t worry. It should be fine, Celty. Izaya is not interested in anything other than humans. He probably is treating your head like just a ball or expensive Chinese pottery.”

“That’s not comforting at all……”

Seiji was nodding firmly at his older sister behind Celty who pointed out Shinra’s comment.

“It’s okay, sister. I don’t mind how much she loves other people. I just want to be the last person who she smiles at in the end.”

“Seiji….. Ah, although I can’t help feeling upset…. The way you love her is wonderful because it’s very much like you….”

——What is this atmosphere!

“Don’t worry! Even if the head disappears from this world I will keep smiling at you forever!”

“Shut up, homewrecker. You should die nine times and be used to make a shamisen.” *[see translator’s note 1]*

“That’s horrible, Namie-san! But if I can create a lovely sound for Seiji after I become a shamisen, I will be happy!”

——Just be clear whether this is a bizarre conversation or praising a loved one!

Celty is playing the role of the person who only points out the situation in this room while not understanding it completely.

Yumasaki, as a third party, spoke as if he gave her a final blow.

“I understand, Seiji-kun. The Century’s End Conqueror also said something like that! It’s good to have a special girl besides you in the end! That’s love!” *[see translator’s note 2]*

“Thank you very much….! I will do my best!”

“Well, since you love a Dullahan’s head, you’re a young guy who has a strong attachment to 2D! If you want, I’ll give you doujinshi about Dullahan or the head of a monster that I have.”

——Wow, there is such doujinshi!?

——This world is very wide! So is Yumasaki’s taste!

Celty is even more confused but Shinra asks Yumasaki.

“Yumasaki-kun, can I take a look at the book next time? Just the Dullahan one is fine.”

“Shinra!?”

“Don’t worry, Celty. It’s not like I like every Dullahan girl! I just want to roleplay the sexual situation in the book together! Yes, I just want to something erotic with Celty! Please!”

“What are you talking about in front of people with a normal expression!”

Just like that, Celty moved the shadow that was around Shingen towards Shinra and tied around him.

“Ow ow ow ow, Celty, sorry, don’t be mad….ow.”

Shinra looks like he’s in serious pain for a moment so maybe the shadow touched the surface of his scar.

Then Celty spreads the shadow like she was afraid and approaches Shinra who was in the wheelchair.

“Sorry Shinra! I was just acting like normal…. Are you okay?”

“I’m fine, I’m fine. It’s good rehabilitation.”

“I’m so sorry….”

Shingen, who was released from the shadow, looks at Celty who became quiet just like that and speaks.

“Celty-kun is like that. Normally you’re very strong but you become like a baby in front of Shinra, don’t you? I should add this in my research report to Nebula.”

“Wait, what research report?”

“Hahhahha, if I submit an observation report about non human existences like you, I can get a bonus! Even if the report is about romantic emotions like this!”

It was Yumasaki who reacted to Shingen’s explanation.

“Please hold on, Kishitani-sensei’s father! Is there such a thing as a non human existence report! Like a vampire that has been living for hundreds of years with

the appearance of a girl or a tsundere wolf girl!”

“Fufufufu…. My son’s friend. This is between you and me, but of course there are! That’s not the field of work that I’m in charge of but I have seen a report about an old lolita vampire who loves video games and a pretty girl werewolf that has the tendency to be starving.”

Yumasaki responds to some of the words that he heard through the gas mask and his eyes sparkle through closed eyelids.

“Oooh. Kishitani-sensei’s father, you unexpectedly understand that kind of stuff! I am so moved! Finally the entrance to the 2D world is here! Please, I beg you! I will sell half of my soul so please introduce me to the vampire! Then I can find the suspect with abnormal powers who did a hit and run on Kadota-san and beat him into pieces!”

“Hit and run? Kadota? What are you talking about? I wish I could introduce you but it’s kind of impossible since I don’t have any connection and I might be fired or have my salary cut.”

Celty, who anticipated the situation will become even more confusing, created a giant word with her shadows on the ceiling along with a quotation mark and dashes like the ones used in anime when a character screams after she moved her upper body while inhaling.

“Don’t make things even more complicated——!”

♂♀

Part 9

Somewhere in Ikebukuro.

Around the same time, the person who knows where the “head” is——- Orihara Izaya was experiencing a life threatening situation.

While he was contacting Kujiragi Kasane by phone, he was attacked by Slon who was manipulated by “another line of Saika” that she had and he was knocked unconscious completely.

The giant Slon, whose height is over 2 metres, went down the emergency stairs while he was holding the unconscious Izaya.

“Sorry, Orihara Izaya.”

Although he’s Russian, he talks to the unconscious Izaya with fluent Japanese.

“You thought you were making me into a double agent of Awakusukai by convincing me…. But you haven’t realised that I am working for ‘mother.’”

Saika.

The demon sword that was once sold to Kishitani Shingen by “Yodogiri Jinnai” and cut the head of Celty Sturluson.

Eventually the sword took over the daughter Sonohara Anri’s body from a woman named Sonohara Sayaka and it has been singing a love song to human beings from inside of her.

Although it’s existence is in the form of cursing others in the name of love by cutting others and corroding human beings by producing “children”——- Anri does not want that and it doesn’t seem like the number of “children” will increase from her sword for now.

However, it didn't mean that Saika's true self was only in the swing of Sonohara Anri.

At the point the sword was sold to Shingen, it had already existed in two ways.

It was broken into two pieces and trained again separately.

Even though it became shorter temporarily, the shape doesn't mean anything when it becomes part of a human's body. For a user who knows how to control it like Anri's mother, it is possible to stretch the length many times from the intention of the sword itself.

Either way, the swing of Saika that had been "broken into two pieces" is in the hands of Sonohara Anri. The other swing still remains in the body of Kujiragi Kasane.

Slon, who was somehow cut by Kujiragi, knocked Orihara Izaya unconscious as she wishes, then he was trying to bring him to the nest of Kujiragi.

Slon, whose eyes were very red as he opened them widely as characteristic of Saika's "children", walked down the emergency stairs.

He was trying to jump into his own car——-

"What are you doing, Slon-san?"

He looked back to the voice——- There were two men wearing jackets with a dragon on them standing there.

They were members of "Dragon Zombie", gangsters that Izaya is taking care of.

"….Seems like he fell down the stairs and hit the back of his head on the floor. I was about to bring him to the hospital."

The made up words came out spontaneously.

However, he's probably used to it since his voice didn't sound upset at all.

After the members of Dragon Zombie looked at each other's faces, they asked Slon.

"Shall we bring him?"

"No, I can do it."

"I can't let that happen. Because you're a helper from Awakusukai. It would be bad if you bring Mr. Orihara to the office of Awakusukai."

It seems like they haven't trusted Slon from the beginning.

Besides the incident with Saika, Izaya was on guard towards Awakusukai so he had been telling the other members not to trust him.

"….Well, that's right. Then I will let you guys take him."

As soon as he said that, Slon *threw* Izaya's body towards one of the members of Dragon Zombie.

"Wha-….!"

The man who Slon threw Izaya towards could not hold Izaya's body, so he fell backwards like that.

At the same time, Slon took one step forward and punched the other member of Dragon Zombie's chin and kicked the chin of the other man who fell down while turning back.

Although It was not severe damage, the two members of Dragon Zombie lost consciousness because their brains shook within a brief moment.

“…..It was good it was the two of you. If It were Kine and Sharaku, it would have taken me a bit more time.”

Saying only that, Slon picked up Izaya’s body again, and brought him into his car.

Slon, who started the engine of the car, left the two unconscious men there like that.

The moment his car turned——- from the shadow of the building, *another member of Dragon Zombie appears*.

He took out the transceiver from his pocket without saying anything and started to contact somewhere.

“….It’s me.”

“I *caught* your customer.”

Part 10

Fifteen minutes later Some place in the city

The residential area that has very few pedestrians and is far away from the bustling streets.

A house that has a backyard in the residential area.

Slon stopped the car in the garage of what just looks like a normal house.

Then he opened the door inside that connects the garage to the house, trying not to be seen from outside the moment he tries to bring Izaya——

Slon felt the sound of the engine from the motorcycle that echoed from a place a small distance away.

It sounded like the bike is not running but stopping—— but he doesn't think the bike is just waiting for a signal.

——Were we followed?

He looked back and he knew his guess was right.

In front of the garage, a young female who has a masculine appearance was standing there.

Sharaku Mikage—— a woman whose bangs were very outstanding that gave a very masculine impression from the muscles on her legs and arms.

That woman who is one of Izaya's people and who has met Slon many times muttered after looking at him, who was holding Izaya.

“I don’t quite understand the situation.”

“…..”

“Should I think the spy from Awakusukai revealed their identity?”

“It’s a little different. But you’re not completely wrong about this situation.”

Slon tried to use the same method as before and approached Mikage while holding Izaya.

“I don’t think you came here alone but your driver is where you parked the bike? So let me clean you up as well and then wait for the instructions from ‘Mother.’” *[see translator’s note 1]*

“Mo…. what instructions?”

Mikage, who couldn’t hear the Russian word, asks again.

However, Slon ignores her question and took one more step forward.

Then he throws the body of Izaya, who is still unconscious, towards Mikage forcefully.

However, Mikage kicked Izaya’s body back towards Slon *with a forward kick* and the moment he caught him, he jumped next to her powerfully.

She kicks the wall of the garage and car like that one after the other and brings her body up to a higher place.

She tries to give a sharp kick to Slon’s head but Slon avoided it in the very last second.

“You’re good at this, girl.”

“Don’t avoid it, dickhead.”

Mikage replies with unfriendly words and gives Slon a look from the roof of the car.

Slon threw Izaya on the floor of the garage and tried to keep distance from Mikage for a moment.

However, the next moment——

Slon felt severe pain around his waist like his intestines directly exploded and he fell down on the ground without being able to scream.

“….It’s done.”

The baldheaded man mutters to Mikage calmly while he’s turning off the switch of the baton shaped stun gun that he held in his hand.

However, Mikage looked at Kine from above with an unfriendly expression and spoke as if she were unsatisfied.

“We were having a good moment. Why did you interfere, Kine-san?”

“Because that’s my job.”

The man called Kine said that plainly and he handcuffed the man who was foaming at the mouth with the cuffs he took out from his pocket.

In the case of an attack by a stun gun, people say a hit to the kidney is the most shocking and painful. Slon, who experienced it for a few seconds, keeps shaking over his whole body although he is not dead.

Mikage, who thought this conversation will never come to an end, didn't complain any further and changed the topic while getting off of the car.

"By the way, considering the fact that he was called a guy who can do everything from Russia, he was easily subdued by Kine-san carelessly. Should I compliment your skill, Kine-san?"

"No…. This man did not fight with his full power. He looked like he was being manipulated by something, so maybe that's why his sense was dulled."

"….Speaking of which, his eyes were very red. It looked the same way as the people who were beaten by Haruna."

Niekawa Haruna.

Originally she was a girl who was cut by Sonohara Sayaka and became a "child" but she overcame Saika's curse through her own will and used the power for herself.

After that, she was cut by Sonohara Anri as well and controlled by a curse even further—— she'd beat the curse again and now she is hiding in the city of Ikebukuro as a cohort of Izaya.

Mikage becomes quiet for a while and tells her guess to Kine.

"….That means that girl betrayed Izaya?"

"I'm not sure. But as far as I know, this house does not belong to Awakusukai."

After he restrained both of Slon's legs with handcuffs, Kine talked to another guy who was laying on the floor.

"Let me hear what you're thinking, Orihara Izaya."

Then——

The man who was supposed to be unconscious looked up slowly and smiled at these two people.

“Stop it. Since when did you notice I was pretending to be asleep, Kine-san?”

“When you were kicked by the Sharaku girl you were biting down like you were ready for it. How long have you been awake?”

“Maybe since when the car arrived at this garage. Well, I thought I would be better off being quiet.”

Izaya looks at Mikage right there and speaks while laughing bitterly.

“I didn’t think my body itself would be used to protect you, but I never thought that you’d kick it back like that. No, sorry. I lied. I kind of knew it, that’s why I bit down in a hurry.”

“I see… Should I kick you even harder?”

“No thank you. Honestly, my ribcage might be broken.”

Izaya doesn’t listen seriously to Mikage’s words while laughing and answers while looking down at Slon.

He answers these two people’s questions as if he is showing off as a professional informant.

“Certainly Slon was being manipulated by ‘Saika’. But the person manipulating him is not Sonohara Anri or Niekawa-san.”

“Oh?”

“Kujiragi Kasane. She is also a holder of ‘Saika.’”

“? What do you mean?”

Izaya answers while laughing with interest at Mikage who frowns.

“Well, I will explain it later on.”

Izaya smiled even more pleasantly while looking at the garage that surrounded him.

“However, this was lucky. As soon as I announced I’d fight back against Yodogiri Jinnai…. I mean, Kujiragi Kasane, I could find out one of her hideouts!”

“…..You also need to explain that later on.”

“Aa, sure! The thing that is certain is that if we wait here, we can finally meet Kujiragi-san. She might be thinking I’m about to die after being tied up by Slon.”

“Then for the time being…. let’s all ambush her and throw her a surprise party.”

♂♀

translator’s note 1: only ‘mother’ is said in russian

Part 11

Kawagoe Street　Shinra's apartment

"Alright, for the time being, let's clarify the information."

Celty, who finally finished listening to the whole story, started to type words into her PDA in order to confirm it for herself after shrugging her shoulders up and down as if she was inhaling deeply.

"First, Yumasaki and the driver are looking for the suspect who hit Kadota. Then they chose our place as a temporary hideout since they were attacked by a weird thing while they were searching."

Togusa looked at Celty's words and asked while sweating coldly.

"What, you don't remember my name…..?"

"….I'm sorry."

"Why don't you try to come up with an excuse for a little!? It's Togusa, Togusa! Togusa as in the grass that you pass through is filled with lots of Ruri-chans!" *[see translator's note 1]*

Togusa might feel even sadder since Celty apologised directly to him, and he introduces himself with example that doesn't make any sense while his eyes were filled with tears.

Celty keeps clarifying the story after she apologised to Togusa again.

"Then Yagiri Namie was attacked by her uncle Seitarou, who is looking for my head, and his secretary Yodogiri. Then according to Shingen, the person who is manipulating the Yodogiri guy from behind the scenes is the secretary named Kujiragi."

“There was the real Yodogiri Jinnai as a person pulling the strings from behind the person pulling the strings, but he’s already dead.”

Celty keeps typing words after she was convinced by Shingen’s remarks.

“I see. Then Seiji-kun and Mika-chan felt that they might be kidnapped and came here to ask for advice and hide out.”

“Yeah, that’s right. Mika advised us to do so. Then I thought the underground doctor Kishitani-san might know a lot about a place to hideout.”

“I see…. Anyway, it’s good that Mika-chan realized that.”

“Yeah. When I wiretapped Yagiri Pharmaceuticals, I heard that kind of conversation and got scared….”

“…I feel like I just heard something even scarier from you just now, but I’m going to pretend I didn’t hear it.”

Celty continues the conversation while she’s afraid.

“Well, as a result of that, we know Izaya was bigger trash than we imagined. We should beat him up and get my head back.”

“Celty!”

Celty types on the keyboard as if she’s trying to make Shinra, who is shouting out of anxiety, feel relived.

“Don’t worry, Shinra. Let’s get my head back without me getting directly involved and leave it with Shingen’s company. Under the condition that they will absolutely not hurt it, though they can do a little bit of research on it.”

Then, after she hesitated a little, she typed the rest of her words.

“If I get my head back, it’ll happen many decades later. I will wait until your last day has come.”

“Celty….!”

Shingen shouts in protest as if he is trying to calm down Shinra, who is moved by her comment.

“Hold on, Celty-kun! I have two complaints about your story!”

“….What are they?”

Since she doesn’t have eyes to give him a look with, Celty gives him her PDA as if she is tired.

Then Shingen answered proudly.

“First of all, you might be mistaking Nebula for some kind of convenient bank that will lend you money for an unlimited amount of time!?”

“I said you can do research on my head so I think you should thank me instead…. Anyway, what is your other complaint?”

“You just called me ‘Shingen’! I told you a long time ago you should call me either ‘Father’ or ‘Papa’!”

“Shut up!”

Then Emilia—— Shingen’s new wife who was in the other room until then, comes out and speaks broken Japanese while smiling.

“I approve. I don’t have problem that Nebula keeps your head.” *[see translator’s note 2]*

“E-Emilia, what are you talking about?”

“No problem, no problem. It’s okay, you can just give him a smooth talk as much as you like.” *[see translator’s note 2]*

“Who do you want to smooth talk, the company or me….?”

For the time being, Celty decided to talk about it later although she was feeling nervous and she asked Namie about the owner of her “head”.

“Then what is that Izaya guy up to? Does he have any accomplices?”

After Namie looked down and thought about something for a while, she gave Celty a look of hatred and answered.

“I don’t have any responsibility to answer that. I appreciate the fact that pervert in the white saved me but don’t forget I only have a grudge against you.”

“Wait…. did I do something that made you hold a grudge against me….? I certainly saved Mikado and destroyed your research team but you reap what you sow….”

“I don’t care about that kind of thing! I have a grudge against you because your head flirted with Seiji!”

“I have nothing to do with that!”

Celty types as if she is screaming.

However, Namie didn't forget her grudge and gave her a look of disgust.

"So if you're telling me to leave because I'm not answering, I'll just go without any hesitation."

Then Namie speaks while pointing at Shingen as if she is trying to change the subject.

"By the way, that pervert in the white over there knew that Izaya had your head. Since a long time ago."

"Hey…. Namie-kun, you're supposed to read the atmosphere and keep that to yourself! Especially when I succeeded in changing the subject by acting like a pervert!"

Celty slowly faced Shingen who was upset and complained.

"Kishitani Shingen…. You again…."

Shingen looked away for a second but he sighed from under his gas mask as if he gave up.

"Phew…. Now that you know about it there's nothing I can do. I certainly knew where your head was but I just let him go because I wanted to see how Orihara-kun would use the head and the result of him using a different approach than Nebula. Yeah, this not exactly an 'inspection on the head' but an 'experiment on the head'!" *[see translator's note 3]*

"Eh? ….Ah, you're so stupid it's hard to understand your joke using homonyms!"

"I'm not stupid! I told you to call me 'Father'!"

"Shut up, pervert!"

Celty thought about restraining him with her shadows but she decided to punish him with only words at this point since she felt awkward doing anything else in front of Emilia.

Then the conversation was over right there and Celty started to think whether she should talk about the “Dollars vs the Yellow Scarves” with everyone.

——What should I do?

——If I talk about the incident between me and MIkado-kun, I might just make them even more confused…..

——Since Akabayashi-san…. Awakusukai is related. It’s one thing if it’s only Namie or Shingen, but I can’t get Yumasaki and Mika-chan involved with this.

Then Shinra, who was in the wheelchair, spoke after he made sure Celty had stopped typing on her PDA.

“Well, anyway, let’s talk about what we should do from now on.”

“Shinra?”

“We might have some kind of connection since we’ve all gathered here. Why don’t we all corporate with everyone here? It might sound like it’s too much but let’s team up.”

“Like the Dollars?”

Shinra quietly shakes his head in response to the frowning Togusa’s question.

“We are not a color gang. It’s not like we all got together because we were attracted by the existence of the Dollars and the Yellow Scarves.”

“Well, if you say it’s a coincidence that we got together, it’s a coincidence.”

“We are here because we have the same purpose. We should be able to provide each other with helpful information. Yeah, it’s like a support group consisting of people who have the same purpose…. A support group…. Yeah, how about we call it ‘Guild’ temporarily?”

“You sound like someone who has been playing games too much.”

Although Togusa smiled bitterly, Yumasaki stood up with sparkling eyes.

“I agree! Guild! Sounds good! It sounds like a fantasy! Guild! Ah, the guild of Guild! That’s the kind of thing my heart beats for!”

“Calm down, Yumasaki.”

Although Togusa stops him as if he is tired of him, Yumasaki’s excitement doesn’t seem to cool down.

“But if we were to be a guild, we need a name like the Assassin’s Guild or the Pirate’s Guild! I have a good idea, how does the name of the witch guild I belong to online, ‘Shadow the Emperor’, sound! Or ‘Queen of Nightmare’! Or ‘Giant Girl Flying in the Sky’!”

Shinra replied while smiling at Yumasaki.

“Well, we can decide on a name later but, for the time being, how about making Celty the leader of the guild? She won’t have any special authority but she’ll be something like a ‘person who you have to go through for now?””

“Huh?”

Celty, who was suddenly pointed out, typed to Shinra while making a surprised

gesture.

“Wait a minute! I don’t get it! What are you suddenly talking about?”

“Well, since you’re heavily involved with numerous incidents, I thought it would be easier if all the information goes to you, Celty.”

“B-but…. I have a feeling I might get into unnecessary trouble too….”

Shinra bowed towards Celty, who resisted, while sitting in the wheelchair.

“Please, Celty. I will take responsibility.”

“I can’t say no if you ask me so genuinely…. But, well, I don’t know what the others will say.”

Celty looked around but it seemed like nobody was particularly opposed to the idea.

As for Namie, she might not be interested in the support group itself since she didn’t even join the conversation and just kept looking at Seiji’s profile.

“Well, if you don’t like it, you can just quit later on. It’s just for the time being. I will help you out as much as I can, so please, Celty.”

“…. Okay. Well, everyone, I’ll do my best.”

Everyone looked at the words Celty typed and Yumasaki clapped his hands first while Shingen, Mika, and the others joined in after.

“I’m somehow embarrassed….”

In Celty’s mind, she felt as if her body was turning red from having the kind of

experience she never had before, as if she was recommended to be class representative.

The small organization that cannot be called a real organization was born in Ikebukuro.

A few days later——

At this point, no one could imagine that this organization would influence the balance of power between the colour gangs in Ikebukuro.

How they could change the blueprint of the city as a result——

Was something even Shinra, who started the organization, couldn’t anticipate at all.

♂♀

Part 12

Chatroom

Mai: I hate feeling lonely

Mai: I hope something interesting happens

Kyo-san left the room.

Mai-san left the room.

No one is in the chatroom.

No one is in the chatroom.

No one is in the chatroom.

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No one is in the chatroom.

No one is in the chatroom.

No one is in the chatroom.

Sharo-san entered the chatroom.

Sharo: What's up

Sharo: I just missed Kurumai

Sharo: This is boring

Sharo-san left the chatroom.

Mai-san entered the chatroom.

Kyo-san entered the chatroom.

Kyo: Well, I see another person entered the room, we just missed them

Kyo: Sharo-san is impatient, guys who are so impatient aren't popular

Mai: Good evening

Mai: That's unfortunate

Pure 100%-san entered the chatroom.

Pure 100%: Good evening

Kyo: Oh, welcome. We were feeling lonely, very lonely, both mentally and physically

Kyo: I appreciate that you came since I was thinking of chatting with Mai-san like this to try to make each other feel better

Pure 100%: Stop that already, Kyo-san!

Secret Mode Pure 100%: Hey, Kururi and Mairu

Secret Mode Pure 100%: Do you have a minute?

Secret Mode Kyo: Oh, you want to talk about something we can't say in public?

Secret Mode Mai: Am I on secret mode?

Secret Mode Mai: What is it?

Secret Mode Pure 100%: Well, it's not a big deal

Secret Mode Pure 100%: It's better if you didn't come to the city of Ikebukuro for a while

Secret Mode Kyo: I can't just say alright to such a sudden request

Secret Mode Pure 100%: Oh, that's right, I will tell you in detail

Secret Mode Pure 100%: Something is going on

Secret Mode Pure 100%: Your brother might be involved with it

Secret Mode Pure 100%: So there might be a chance that someone might try to do something to you guys because of your brother

Secret Mode Pure 100%: I'd feel very bad if that happened since I'm involved too

Secret Mode Kyo: So you mean you're involved with a bad plot?

Secret Mode Mai: I’m scared

Secret Mode Pure 100%: Yeah, I’m deeply involved with it

Secret Mode Pure 100%: I don’t deny that

Secret Mode Kyo: I thought you hate our stupid brother from the bottom of your heart….

Secret Mode Kyo: If that’s the case, don’t you think it’s a good idea if you kidnap us first?

Secret Mode Mai: What are you going to do?

Secret Mode Pure 100%: No, I consider you two my friends

Secret Mode Pure 100%: Oh, sorry, that’s not accurate

Secret Mode Pure 100%: To me, you guys are something like

Secret Mode Pure 100%: The type of friends who I don’t want involved in this kind of stuff

Secret Mode Pure 100%: Well, even though I said that, you guys will try to get involved with it either way, right?

Secret Mode Kyo: Of course. Instead what you said made us more interested

Secret Mode Kyo: People say that some amount of reverse psychology works…. is that what you’re trying to do?

Secret Mode Mai: If it sounds interesting

Secret Mode Pure 100%: I don’t know about that

Secret Mode Pure 100%: I myself am still indecisive

Secret Mode Pure 100%: Whether I should let you guys get involved in this dangerous game

Secret Mode Pure 100%: To be honest with you, I like you two

Secret Mode Pure 100%: If I could, I’d like to take good care of you guys

Secret Mode Pure 100%: But I also feel like I want to make you guys get involved since I like you too

Secret Mode Pure 100%: If I were to destroy myself, I want you two to be with me

Secret Mode Kyo: You’re trying to make us kill ourselves unwillingly with you?

Secret Mode Mai: I’m scared

Secret Mode Kyo: You seem like you’re very similar to our stupid brother, but the part of you that’s different from him is completely different

Secret Mode Kyo: If it were our stupid brother, he’d never tell us such things

Secret Mode Pure 100%: Is that so? I didn’t expect to be put in the same category as that guy

Secret Mode Kyo: Sorry, that was rude

Secret Mode Kyo: But I’ve been thinking that something was wrong for a few

days….

Secret Mode Kyo: So were you pulling the strings behind it?

Secret Mode Kyo: Was that you who hit Kadota-san from the Dollars…?

Secret Mode Pure 100%: Would you believe me if I said I really don't know about it?

Secret Mode Pure 100%: There's no point in denying it since I'm currently involved with dangerous people

Secret Mode Pure 100%: So I don't know if I can meet you guys after summer break

Secret Mode Pure 100%: That's why I thought I should tell you guys when I had such a good chance

Secret Mode Pure 100%: I had fun knowing you, Kururi and Mairu

Secret Mode Pure 100%: But the "fun" that I really want is something different

Secret Mode Pure 100%: If you can still be my friends when I have enough of that kind of fun

Secret Mode Pure 100%: ….Well, how can I say it, I'm happy

Secret Mode Pure 100%: See you later

Pure 100%: Oh, I just remembered I have something to do

Pure 100%: So I'm going to go!

Secret Mode Kyo: Well, I really don’t know if he’s pure or pitch black

Secret Mode Mai: Right?

Kyo: See you again, whether we meet in here or in real life, it doesn’t matter

Mai: See you later

Pure 100%-san left the chatroom.

Kyo-san left the chatroom.

Mai-san left the chatroom.

No one is in the chatroom.

No one is in the chatroom.

No one is in the chatroom.

Chapter 5 The Apple doesn't Fall Far from the Tree

Part 1

The following day In the morning Ikebukuro At Raira Hospital

The next day after many things happened.

There was one change in the city of Ikebukuro.

When Anri visited the hospital where Kadota might wake up soon——

She bumped in one young person who came to see Kadota from Saitama.

“Then do you know where Kadota’s room is?”

“In front of the door of the surgeon’s department.”

The person who asked in a light tone is a young boy named Rokujou Chikage.

Not only his tone of voice but the way he dresses and his facial expression make him look carefree, but he has another side to him as the leader of a motorcycle gang in Saitama called “Toramaru”.

Karisawa Erika responded to the boy in a light tone as well.

“Sorry, Rocchi. They said only family members are allowed to see him right now. Nobody else is allowed. It looks like it’s not fatal but he’s still unconscious.”

“Oh, I see, I see. I made a mistake. If he was awake, I wanted to show off my girlfriend and try to cheer him up.”

A few girls showing various emotions on their faces stood behind him as he shook his head like he was disappointed.

The young boy who is walking around with a harem talked to a person who he just barely met for the first time before in a carefree manner.

“You’re very friendly to call me ‘Rocchi’ from the beginning. Can we exchange numbers?”

“Okay.”

“Thank you.”

The girls behind him didn’t say anything to Chikage whose behavior made it seem like he was picking her up, probably because they are so used to it.

But it was just that they were behaving since they were in a hospital, though you could tell from their eyes that “they will complain to him about it as soon as they leave the property”.

Sonohara Anri, who was behind Karisawa—— contemplates whether she should join the conversation or not by looking at their behavior.

She barely knows her but somehow she saw her using “Saika” before.

However, the information about Chikage that she got from Anri was only that he was “a person that stopped the fight between me and a mysterious woman” and she only thought, “If he’s Kadota’s acquaintance, he can’t be a bad person.”

“Karisawa Erika-chan, you have a cool and cute name.”

Chikage remembers Anri very well and he smiles freshly at her.

“Hmm, may I ask your name?”

“Eh!? Um… I’m Sonohara Anri…”

“Sonohara Anri, huh! How nice, your name sounds like a celebrity.”

“Eh? Um…..”

Anri doesn’t know how to respond to Chikage who always speaks in a light tone.

Karisawa spoke to Chikage like she was offering help to Anri.

“Stop that, you can’t flirt with her. She’s already flirting with her important boyfriends.”

“Eh, really? Can I also participate in the race?”

The girls around him were getting mad despite laughing behind Chikage who spoke as if he cannot let her go. Although Anri imagined what kind of dreadful scene is waiting for Chikage after he leaves the hospital——but considering the fact that they are staying with him when he’s always like this, she assumed that these girls and Rokujou Chikage must have some kind of trusting relationship.

Anri was a bit envious of their relationship——

But that kind of weakness might be taken advantage of by the voice of “Saika”.

As a matter of fact, right after she saw Rokujou Chikage and his girlfriends, she started to hear Saika talking to her directly, which was different from Saika’s “words of love” that echoed in Anri’s head.

——“You’re jealous, aren’t you?”

——“Anri-chan, which one do you want to be?”

——“Do you want to be that guy?”

——“Or one of the girls?”

——“Do you want Ryuugamine Mikado-kun and Kida Masaomi-kun to serve you?”

——“Or do you want to serve either one of those boys?”

——“Do you want to depend on them?”

——“Do you want to be depended on by them?”

——“Do you want to control them?”

——“Do you want to be controlled by them?”

Saika keeps talking to Anri and trying to lure her in by singing a hymn about humanity.

Anri tried to push the voice “inside of the frame” in her mind, but she couldn’t manage to do it well.

Anri was about to realize the reason.

Saika has already become an existence “outside of the frame” within her.

It started because of one word that echoed in her head right after the incident with Heiwajima Shizuo and Niekawa Haruna was solved.

——“Although I cannot love you, I don’t hate you.”

Part 2

It might just be my imagination but I've been thinking that.

But when I think about it now, I might have been hoping it wasn't my imagination—— rather than it being just in my mind.

Since then, she sometimes—— started to feel that Saika is talking to Anri herself.

Saika has been a parasite to her and Anri has been forced to hear Saika's words of love towards all humans except herself.

But Anri didn't think that was very painful.

You could say that Anri even respected Saika for one reason: she was an "existence that can love someone passionately".

However that relationship has changed.

She knows the reason. Although it is something she wants to avoid, Anri is certain.

It's not like Saika has changed. What has changed is Anri herself.

Anri, who has not been able to love others until then and who has shut herself in her shell— she is letting other people into her "side of the frame".

That is a big change.

Although Harima Mika was a very important friend to her, she was also the symbol of Anri's "ideal self".

It’s more accurate to say that she was the main character of her painting rather than a person on her side of the frame.

She sometimes came to her side of the frame, but as for Mikado and Masaomi, it’s more like they were on her side from the beginning.

It may have affected her greatly to witness that the non human existence called a Dullahan — Celty was creating a strong bond to a human named Kishitani Shinra.

Although she didn’t think anything at the time, that kind of small “everyday life” has probably been transforming a human named Anri slowly but surely.

For the current Anri, Saika was not simply an abnormal existence or something she depends on, but she was something that she could call a companion that she can communicate with honestly and equally.

Even if there’s no love there.

——“Go on, use me”

——“Swing me”

——“I will love everybody!”

——“Instead of you! I will love!”

——“So you can just grab me!”

——“Which one of them is the one you really like?”

——“Do you like Mikado-kun, who is quiet and can heal you?”

——“Or do you want to burn yourself out by trying Masaomi-kun, who is a cheater?”

——“Once I love him, you can occupy his body even though Masaomi-kun has someone he truly loves, you know? Forever”

Anri thinks deeply in response to Saika’s voice that keeps talking inside of her mind without stopping.

That’s none of Saika’s business.

I will never let her touch Ryuugamine Mikado or Kida Masaomi.

Then—— in response, Saika talked to her more.

——“Ohhh…. You’ve become quite strong”

——“It’s been quite a while since you’ve given a ‘reply’ to my voice”

“…..!”

Saika still keeps talking to Anri who has stiffened her body.

——“Don’t be so afraid, let’s talk a little, shall we?”

——“I told you, right? I don’t hate you although I cannot love you”

Behind the voice she was talking to Anri in, Saika was whispering “words of love” as if they were background music.

However, the voice that was talking to Anri was very clear and sounded just like they were having a regular conversation.

——“I told you before, right?”

——“As long as you own me, I can only love the people who you want to cut…”

——“Well then, how do you think I could love that person named Igor?”

——That is….

——“It’s not like you fell in love with him at first sight”

——“I fell in love at first sight with that person’s strength. But not as much as I did with Heiwajima Shizuo”

——“You understand, right? At the beginning, you and I were rejecting each other….”

——“Now we are getting closer to each other little by little, right?”

——That is…. that might be….

——*“I’ve become a bit like you and you’ve become a bit like me”*

——You’re wrong.

——“That’s it, you know?”

——No. I am… myself.

——“You don’t need to reject it. I’m not trying to take over you”

——“It’s just about us understanding each other”

——“I feel like your mother and I understood each other pretty well. Although we couldn’t love each other”

——Stop…. please.

——“That’s why your mother knew how to use me well”

——“She was capable of many things you can’t do right now”

——“Do you want me to tell you? How your mother was feeling….”

——Stop!

Part 3

“What’s wrong? You look pale. Oh, sorry, did I scare you?”

Anri regains consciousness when she hears the voice of Chikage who is looking at her face.

Although the words of love still were echoing in her head, she stops hearing Saika’s words to her.

Anri bowed to Chikage after she looked around for a second.

“….I’m sorry, I was a little dizzy…”

“Hey hey, are you okay? Luckily we’re in the hospital so you should go see a doctor, you know? You think it’s just dizziness but sometimes it could be a sign of a serious disease. I want a pretty girl like you to live way longer than me and become a cute grandmother.”

Anri looks at Chikage who is saying caring words to her in a light tone of voice and thinks.

——He’s a lot like Kida-kun.

She remembered Masaomi’s face and thought about the time she spent with him and Mikado.

Those days were fun.

The lovable daily life that was not a dream or a hallucination but was something Anri could surely reach.

The irreplaceable days that *accepted* someone like herself.

She is overwhelmed by a vague anxiety that these days will never come back.

However, Anri chose not to be afraid of it.

She came to meet Karisawa in order to get rid of her anxiety.

However, she ended up meeting with this strange guy there——

——Although this guy knows I used to have that Japanese sword….

——How come he is talking to me normally?

The appearance of this strange guy made Anri postpone her purpose of visiting for a while.

If this man is an acquaintance of Kadota, he might know something about the current situation of the city.

Although she expected that, that possibility was denied right away.

“Well, I don’t know anything about what happened this time.”

Chikage, who said that to Karisawa, asks her a question in a kind tone of voice.

“Honestly, did the guy who hit Kadota get caught?”

Karisawa’s smile slightly changed in response to Chikage’s words.

But Karisawa answers without changing the subject while smiling in a slightly troubled manner.

“Not at all. I think the police are looking for the suspect…”

“Huh….? In other words, it was a hit and run?”

“Oh, you didn’t know that. Yeah. It was a hit and run. I have no idea who did it though.”

Rokujou becomes silent for a while in response to her light words.

“Alright. Well, I’m going home now. It would be great if you could text me when he wakes up.”

“Are you going back to Saitama?”

“No, I am planning to go to Nanja Town with my girlfriends. After I see them off, I’m going to have a night on the town…”

When he said that, his girlfriends punched him and Chikage left as if he was running away.

Anri had a strange feeling in her stomach while she looked at the back of the man who left the hospital without saying a proper goodbye.

——That person…

Rokujou Chikage. The moment he confirmed that it was a “hit and run” from Karisawa——

She felt like he revealed a dark, negative emotion for just a second.

♂♀

Part 4

Outside of the hospital

“Your face was a little scary earlier, Rocchi.”

When he left the hospital, one of the members of Rokujou’s entourage— Non talked to him.

“Hm? Oh, sorry sorry. Did I scare you?”

“If I were still scared of you, Rocchi, I wouldn’t be here.”

“Oh… Yeah, that’s true. Thanks.”

The girls in his entourage looked at the back of Chikage, who seemed like his mind was somewhere else, and saw each other’s faces and sighed while laughing bitterly.

“You’re thinking something dangerous.”

“What, what? Are you going to get revenge for your friend?”

“You look like you’re ready to get involved. Honestly it’s kind of embarrassing that you act like a pure hero, Rocchi. Well, anyway.”

Chikage fixes his hat to hide his flattery and answers the two girls that said random things one by one.

“Well, I don’t deny that. I owe him a lot. Well, don’t worry about it, I wouldn’t cause trouble to you all.”

“I can’t feel relieved unless I know you’re safe, Rocchi, you know? You won’t

get hurt like the other day, right?”

“If that happens, will you please peel the skin off of my apples and feed them to me?”

After he said something frivolous, Chikage closed his mouth and talked to himself in his mind.

——In order to get *revenge on Ikebukuro* while I’m a gang leader…. it’s not good if I didn’t at least pay back my debt to Kadota. For sure.

When he was walking while thinking such things——

He noticed that a strange man was approaching him from the front.

After the man looked at Chikage and his entourage for a second, he passed by them while smiling lightly——

And just like that, he went inside of the hospital and disappeared.

Although Chikage felt some discomfort about the man, he kept walking without especially paying any attention.

——Who was that guy?

——Isn’t he hot wearing black clothes in the summer?

♂♀

Part 5

The hospital　Inside of the premises

Anri and Karisawa who remained behind were having a conversation about Rokujou Chikage for a while—

“So what did you want to talk to me about? What do you mean when you say you want me to know everything about you, Anri-chan?”

Anri closed her eyes slightly in response to Karisawa’s words as if she just remembered.

“Ah… yes. Well, I don’t know how I can explain it…”

“Well, I kind of know what it is. It’s about that Japanese sword, right?”

Karisawa bluntly told Anri who was hesitant.

“! ….Y-yes. That’s right….”

“Is that something we can talk about here?”

Anri looked around unexpectedly in response to her words.

The people around them were visitors who came to see patients.

There are not many people around, but it’s not like there is nobody there.

In the place with that kind of situation, Anri hesitated for a few seconds—

——I can’t make Karisawa go outside with me.

Karisawa has an obvious reason for being here: she has to report as soon as possible to Yumasaki and the others when Kadota wakes up.

Anri thought about that and answered while clenching her fist lightly.

“….Yes, here is no problem. Even if someone hears us…. I don’t think they’ll easily believe us….”

Anri inhales a little while giving a self deprecating smile. Then, as she was about to talk with a strong will——

“Hm, can I join you?”

Anri and Karisawa heard a light tone of voice from the side.

“!?”

She looks back in the direction of the voice—— and a shiver runs through Anri’s entire body.

It was not Saika’s “pleasure” that she feels when she is in front of Heiwajima Shizuo, it was unmistakably the fear that Sonohara Anri herself feels.

“Wow, it’s been a while. What’s going on? You came to visit Dotachin?…. You’re not that type.”

On the contrary to Anri who opens her eyes out of surprise, Karisawa casually speaks to the man when she sees him.

“Anyway, Izaiza, do you know Anri-chan?”

♂♀

Part 6

Thirty minutes earlier

“In the end, you didn’t come here last night, did you, Kujiragi-san?”

Orihara Izaya told her with a cackle while sitting on the sofa in the house.

Although he should have bruises all over his body, Izaya didn’t show any pain and shouted his words to the whole room as if he is talking to himself.

“Unexpectedly, you’re cautious, or perhaps you have the ability of sensing some danger ahead? Like the time you said you were supposed to have regular contact with Slon-san. Wait, could it be that all of the houses in this neighborhood are controlled under Kujiragi-san’s ‘Saika’? Things like our behavior might be transparent to you.”

“If that’s the case, isn’t it dangerous to stay here?”

Izaya answers Mikage’s words without stopping his laughter.

“Considering Saika’s power, the fact you are in danger won’t change no matter where you are. I was surprised when I was stabbed by one of Yodogiri’s group while I was traveling northeast.”

“When I saw the news, I didn’t know how to react.”

“I also wondered how everybody would react. I wanted to observe carefully by all means. When I called the guy who I thought was my best friend, he said, 'Oh yeah?’ and hung up the phone.”

“Is he really your best friend…?”

Izaya keeps talking while thinking, “Oh, this girl is still a normal person,” by

looking at Mikage who was frowning.

“Well, about me being stabbed, I think I was rather lucky? I could feel how I felt in the beginning and I could meet Mamiya-chan again.”

“Who is Mamiya?”

Kine, who was in the corner of the room, answers Mikage’s question.

“Oh, that girl who is a bit questionable.”

“That’s right! As expected of Kine-san, you remember very well. Mamiya Manami-chan.”

“Oh, that girl who stares at you all the time? What did you do to her?”

Izaya told Mikage, who asks while narrowing her eyes, with an expression showing no concern.

“It’s not like I did something big. I just deceived her to come to a suicide meetup and let her drink juice with a sleeping pill in it.”

“….”

Izaya shakes his hands while laughing from looking at Mikage’s face, whose eyes became colder.

“Hahaa, stop it, Mikage. I didn’t do anything you are suspecting. But I was just told, 'I’ll kill you,’ before she fell asleep. One out of the those people came to kill me in the hospital within a day of seeing my name on the news… Don’t you think that’s amazing?”

“She should have killed you right there.”

“That’s terrible.”

“Don’t worry. I’ll take revenge for you.”

Izaya was trying to tease Mikage a little bit by looking at her, who said something like a contradiction——

“It’s 9:00.”

Kine raised his voice while looking at the clock.

“? Oh, it is. What’s wrong with that?”

“It’s the time the hospital opens. Go.”

“…Hm? Are you talking about me? Stop it, I certainly got hurt but not to the extent I have to go to the hospital.”

“…You were smashed in the back of your head. That head stuff starts later on. You should get checked.”

Izaya responded to Kine’s words, who talked indifferently while looking up at the air, with a sigh.

“I said I’m okay, Kine-san really worries too much….”

“You should get checked.”

“I said I’m okay. I don’t feel nauseous.”

Kine slowly looks at Izaya with cold eyes and slowly repeats the same words.

“You should get checked by a doctor.”

“….I got it, I got it. You look like you will kill me if I reject it any more.”

Izaya gives a bitter smile while standing up and and slowly walks towards outside.

“Well, okay, I will see Dotachin while I’m in the hospital.”

Mikage sees off Izaya, who left the house, and opened part of the blinds with her fingers.

It looks like Dragon Zombie members will take him to the hospital, but naturally if he had more protection than that, it will end up making him stand out.

After Mikage sighs briefly, she removes her fingers from the blinds and asks Kine, who was in the corner of the room.

“You are Kine-san? I don’t know much about you but what kind of process made you corporate with Izaya?”

“Keigo.” *[see translator’s note 1]*

“Huh?”

“You should use keigo when you’re talking to older people you’re not that close to. Once you become close, you should confirm whether you can talk to them casually.”

Mikage looked a bit away and awkwardly answered what Kine said indifferently while scratching her ear.

“Hnn, you’re saying something like my dad says… No you’re stating.” *[see translator’s note 2]*

“Isn’t Chairman Sharaku strict about that kind of thing?”

“….You know my dad?”

“My old partner used to learn martial arts at your gym.”

Mikage, who heard that keyword, says one name after she thought a little bit.

“Do you mean Akabayashi-san? …..Right?”

“Yeah. But I haven’t seen him lately.”

“That means you’re also on the other side, Kine-san…?”

“I completely quit that a while ago. I’m a freelance detective now. But I pretty much do any job my customer wants.”

Kine said the minimum of what was necessary.

But he told Mikage after a while of silence.

“I consider it a job, but a woman who has a future like you is better off not being involved with a little devil like Izaya.”

“I know that more than well enough.”

Mikage remembers the past and continues speaking while cracking her neck.

“I don’t regret it but I ended up quitting school after I got involved with that

guy.”

“Ah. I have heard of that from Akabayashi.”

“….”

“You better be careful. That guy is being watched by Awakusukai. If they just only keep an eye on him that’s okay, but it will a problem when they get involved physically. For Akabayashi, if it’s Izaya, he would find fault with anything about him, but if it’s you, he wouldn’t criticize anything.”

Kine only said the “fact” quietly without moving from the place he was standing even a bit.

“If it’s Aozaki, he doesn’t mind to coming and killing anyone, whether it’s me who he has known for a long time or a woman or child. Shiki and Kazamoto would be somewhere in the middle.”

Kine stopped talking and exhaled a bit.

“I mean, Izaya will be finished no matter how much he struggles at the point Awakusukai gets physically involved with him. I hope he doesn’t do anything that will catch their attention as much as possible.”

He looked at Mikage and asked with a voice that had slight emotion.

“Are you still going to be involved with Izaya?”

Kine-san might be worried about me.

Mikage briefly thought about it and spoke after she showed a complicated expression on her face.

“I know the fact that he’s a jerk.”

Mikage sits on the chair near her with a bit of a bitter smile on her face.

“But Izaya is a guy who is very fair to everyone. Whether it’s a good thing or a terrible thing, he will step into the matter and calmly stir it up equally. I think I can be fond of those parts of him compared to people who are superficial.”

“….I see.”

Kine answered shortly and did not ask her any further—-

After Mikage remembered the past for a while, she mutters without any facial expression.

“Well, I agree that it’s better not to be close to that guy. I also think that but Izaya is like an addictive poison. Once you get involved, you go crazy somehow… But in my case, the poison helped me but there are many people who are destroyed by it. Really, I think that guy is like a strong drug.”

“Then if he’s a strong drug, he can be a poison or a medicine depending on the usage.”

Kine half agreed with Mikage’s opinion and wrapped up the conversation without stepping into Mikage’s past.

“But that guy is not a medicine or pill that has no intentions.”

“In the end, no matter how you look at it, that guy himself is very human so that’s why he’s troublesome.”

♂♀

Part 7

Raira General Hospital

“What’s wrong? Anri-chan. You’re making a scary face.”

“Why…. how come you are here….?”

Orihara Izaya answered Anri who asked while breathing slightly heavily while shrugging his shoulders.

“Is it so unexpected that I visit Dotachin at the hospital?”

Karisawa answered his remarks instead of Anri.

“It’s not surprising, Izaiza.”

Karisawa noticed the change in Anri after she saw Izaya and moved to a position between the two of them and kept talking.

“It would be reasonable to think that I came here to tell Dotachin unnecessary things or to see how he is doing since you people think I was involved in the hit and run.”

Although she is smiling, her smiling eyes were slightly more narrow than usual, which may be because she thinks to herself that it’s possible.

“Don’t say that. I don’t even own a car and I don’t have a reason to hit Dotachin. Well, I still am an informant so I will contact you if I get any information about the suspect. I would like to charge you 50000 yen but since you are my acquaintance, I will discount it to 40000 yen.”

“Are you going to give the 40000 yen to Dotachin as a present?”

“Don’t say that. 40000 yen for a present would be a violation of etiquette.” *[see note 1]*

Anri kept answering her own questions harshly in her mind while she was looking at the two who kept a conversation in which she couldn’t tell if they were kidding or not.

—— Orihara Izaya-san.

—— Why, how come?

—— He came here because he wanted to do something to me?

—— Visiting Kadota-san in the hospital? —— No way.

—— No, he’s not that type of person.

—— Is he involved? —— With what? —— To what extent?

Although many questions pop up instantly, it leads her to one conclusion.

Ryuugamine Mikado.

Kida Masaomi.

In other words, the “Dollars” and the “Yellow Scarves”.

The groups that have been acting incomprehensibly recently and the two young boys that seem to be involved with each of them.

“Did you do…. something?”

“Hm? What do you mean by ‘something?’”

“Did you do something…. to Ryuugamine-kun and Kida-kun?”

Karisawa unexpectedly turned back towards the unusually “angry” voice.

“Anri-chan?”

When she turns back, her face shows a bit of surprise.

Sonohara Anri’s expression was harsher than ever and she was staring at Orihara Izaya with her eyes wide open.

The eyes—— were brimming with a slight red light.

Although the emission of the light could easily be washed out by the fluorescent lights, in this moment, the eyes of Sonohara Anri were certainly sparkling and red.

But because of Karisawa’s acute sensitivity, she only reacted with a “bit of surprise”.

On the other hand, without showing any surprise at all, Izaya’s replied while giggling.

“Your doubt is correct. It’s not illogical or anything. If I were you, I would doubt the person named Orihara Izaya like you are doing. But then I wouldn’t see people with such inhuman-like eyes.

"P…please answer the question!”

Are Anri’s cheeks sweating because of fear towards Izaya in front of her or

because she's upset that she couldn't oppress her power?

She was surprised by herself.

Because she had never thought that she would have such a harsh emotion in her heart to this extent by meeting Orihara Izaya again.

The moment she met Izaya for the first time was also the moment she met Mikado.

The day they saved her when she was being ganged up on by a group of three girls.

To be accurate, she had already known Mikado since the entrance exam but that day was the first time she talked to Mikado properly.

She had sensed something unusual since then.

She had somehow known that he is not an ordinary human since she met him for the first time.

But then the impact of the appearance of Heiwajima Shizuo dispelled such a first impression completely.

After that, Anri once tried to cut Izaya in the nighttime in Shinjuku.

However, she couldn't cut him at that time, rather she was given a *declaration of war* from Izaya.

—— "Humans are mine."

—— "Like I'd ever hand them over to some sword."

He left Anri after he said something like that.

After that night, I would have never expected we would meet again like this.

Rather I had even thought that I would never want to see him again.

However, Anri was not stupid or naive enough of a person to think that it was just a coincidence that this man appeared in this place.

Although the fact he came to visit the hospital was really a coincidence.

However, Izaya himself changes the coincidence into something inevitable.

“Okay. Let me answer your question. Surely it’s right to doubt me but it’s bad timing. Lately I haven’t contacted Ryuugamine-kun or Kida-kun directly.”

“….I can’t easily believe that.”

“It’s true. I can explain the reason.”

Those words made Anri’s eyebrows furrow.

Her distance from Izaya was three metres.

If she were to take the sword out of her body, it would reach him right away.

But she doesn’t feel like attacking Izaya and controlling him immediately.

Too much time has passed since the night in Shinjuku.

Although it had been a brief six months, it was enough time for a teenage girl to calm down.

It’s not as if she forgives him or lets her guard down.

However, she needed another reason that could push her in order to attack her opponent.

I wish I could see through lies.

Although she is thinking that, Anri doesn’t have the ability to read people’s minds.

Unless she gets Saika to control someone and lets them tell her all of their thoughts.

Saika is now in silence.

She is probably contemplating how to deal with the opponent who announced they would fight back called Orihara Izaya. Or she still most likely hates him.

“Please explain the reason to me.”

Anri quietly breathed and coerced him to answer.

Then Izaya shrugged again and told her briefly while laughing like a child.

“Because I am going to approach them and get them into trouble.”

“….Eh?”

Anri blinked at Izaya’s words.

She couldn’t understand what he was saying at that moment.

She could understand his words but he wouldn't say such a joke in this situation.

Behind them, Karisawa, who has known Izaya for a little longer than Anri, is murmuring, "Uwaaa… how terrible."

The man in black laughed dryly in front of these two contrasting girls.

"Well, that's exactly it. Your assumption is correct. Lately Ryuugamine-kun and Kida Masaomi-kun are both getting into interesting situations. Let me give you an example… well. It's like these two are walking on a tightrope hanging between two cliffs; imagine the cliff, rope, and two friends."

Because of Izaya's strange example, Anri didn't have time to think about her feelings and she ended up listening to Izaya's words with an ambiguous facial expression.

"Could you imagine it? Then, next step. The two of them are connected by another rope around their necks. If one of them looses their balance, they both fall down the cliff. Or if the one who falls grabs onto the rope, the rope around the other's neck will tighten. Aren't you excited?"

"…"

Anri cannot answer at all.

She did imagine the scene that Izaya described which made her anxious in the exact same way she'd been feeling towards Mikado for the past few months.

"Let's continue imagining. The people around them have various reactions: some are trying to take advantage of the situation and charge others to view the scene, some join them on the rope and jump around, some nice people are trying to place a safety mat under the cliff, others are punching each other."

Izaya keeps talking in a moderate volume so that the hospital staff doesn't pay attention to him while he's leaning on the wall of the hospital's corridor.

"Then I just think as I look at these scenes."

And then Izaya gave Anri an answer after all of these long descriptions.

"Ryuugamine Mikado and Kida Masaomi are walking on the rope for nothing. *How would these two react if I ignite both ends of the rope that they are walking on?*"

"…..?!"

Anri feels as if someone is grabbing her heart.

It feels as if somebody is forcefully sending blood to my brain.

Although she doesn't move even a step, she breathes heavily and questions him with a trembling voice.

"Why…. Why would you do such a thing?"

The answer was very simple, someone who knows Orihara Izaya very well would say, "Well, that sounds like him," and be easily convinced.

"*I just want to see.* How would these two act if that happened?"

The answer this time made Anri's whole body freeze up.

She felt same coldness out of fear as she did the night in Shinjuku.

"If I were to hang them from the rope safely, that wouldn't change anything. I could forcefully resolve everything peacefully but I think I wouldn't be able to

see the real side of humans that way. Although I also love teenage boys and girls who are living a peaceful life… I want to see the scene that only Ryuugamine-kun and Kida-kun can present."

"I don't understand. That… What does it mean…? What is the purpose? That…"

The feeling that occupied Anri's mind is not anger or despair, but pure confusion.

She cannot understand the man named Izaya.

Sonohara Anri couldn't understand his reasons - because he just wants to see - at all.

Sonohara Anri cannot adjust her common sense to Izaya's the same way ordinary people cannot understand the reasons behind a murder such as, "I killed a person because the sky is blue." The difference between her and Izaya might have been more like the difference between TV and radio than analog and digital.

"What is the meaning? Well, out of curiosity, being a researcher, or being a criminal for fun. I don't care what you say about me but these are my simple answers when I am asked. I think I told you this before."

As Izaya had a smile of victory on his face, he expressed his mind without lying.

"Because I like humans."

"…."

He keeps talking without paying attention to the speechless Anri.

"I like humans. I love them."

He murmured furthermore as if he was embracing everything with the smile of philanthropic love.

“I will accept all humans in the world no matter how stupid they act, no matter how ugly they act - well, there are some exceptions.”

His words were more like he was talking to the world than talking to himself.

“Therefore, don’t you think I am allowed do anything to humans all over the world?”

“As a result, if a girl who couldn’t forgive me came to kill me —— I can love her equally.”

****

Part 8

At the same time, some place in the city.

She was a girl that could be seen anywhere downtown if you glanced around.

But she has dark shadows in her eyes and a tense atmosphere surrounding her which makes her a little unapproachable.

The name of the girl is Mamiya Manami.

In spite of her name, the things in the sea of her mind are filled with pure hatred.

Orihara Izaya.

A man who once deceived her and then denied her completely.

As a result, he stopped her from committing suicide so she could have appreciated it—— but her time had not moved forward for even a second since the moment she decided to commit suicide.

Her hatred for Orihara Izaya slips her life into a crosswalk.

She doesn’t remember why she tried to kill herself.

To her, the reason doesn’t matter.

He not only deceived me, he mocked me, who chose “death”, and denied everything completely.

She didn’t have hatred for anyone until that moment.

She didn’t care enough to hate herself or the world.

However, on that day, since the moment she heard those words from the man who put a sleeping pill in her drink in the karaoke room, the negative emotion of "hatred" that did not exist in herself until then exploded all at once.

——"It's love. I can't feel any love for death from you. That's not good. You should love death. And you don't respect nothingness enough. If you're like that, I can't let myself die together with you."

Those words that she heard right before she fainted are inscribed deeply within Manami.

After that, she also remembered that she gave Izaya a look and said, "I'll definitely kill you."

The two voices of Izaya and myself repeated over and over; the hatred eventually became the entire reason she is alive.

Therefore when she saw the news saying "Orihara Izaya was stabbed" on TV, she could take unbelievable actions.

Within a day, she found out the hospital in which Izaya was hospitalized.

She jumped on the bullet train with the bag in which she held the knives that she bought at the home improvement store in her neighborhood.

However, her blade could not cut Izaya's heart.

Contrarily, Manami was pushed down but even then she gave Orihara Izaya a look filled with the endless intention of killing him.

Izaya suggested one thing to her.

——"Are you working?"

——“If you’d like, could you help me with my work? Namie-san alone can not run all of my errands.”

——“Then you will have more chances to kill me, right?”

She remembers many of his words and fearless grins and Manami clenches her teeth.

At that time, what did Orihara Izaya expect of me?

To obediently accept his offer?

Or yell at him to shut up and try to stab him with the knife?

Or would he be satisfied if I killed himself in front of him by cutting my throat while laughing?

She answered in the affirmative to all of them in her mind and denied Orihara Izaya.

Orihara Izaya would be equally amused if I acted on one of the possibilities or I did something else.

That man loves humans.

No matter what result happens, he loves the “actions” and “thoughts” that humans create equally whether it’s malice or good intentions, bad deeds or good deeds.

Manami understood that in just a couple of days and felt nauseous.

——To love everything equally means to love nothing.

——Love that is something egoistic. The depth will be determined by the difference from many others.

Although that was an extreme idea, she thought that way at least.

Because I was denied.

It is too shallow of a reason to kill someone.

However, to her, who gave up on her life for a reason she couldn't remember, that was a rather natural way of thinking.

Without hiding her hatred, she had been working for Orihara Izaya.

While thinking only about how she could give the most "pain" to Izaya.

As a result, she was standing in that place in this moment.

The cheaply built apartment that is located moderately close to Ikebukuro.

When she opened one of the doors, a girl appeared from inside.

"Oh. You're Manami-chan, right? What brought you here?"

The person who appeared from inside was a woman whose long black hair lingers on her ——Niekawa Haruna.

Manami answers her, who somehow had a distorted smile on her face, dispassionately without changing her facial expression.

"…..To harass Izaya."

Manami also already knows about “Saika”.

Actually, she has seen humans who are cut and then manipulated by Haruna.

However, Manami’s eyes that stare at her do not have the color of fear at all.

Her present self rarely felt emotions other than hatred for Orihara Izaya.

“Oh, it must be hard for you. You said harassment, but what are you planning to do specifically?”

She answers Haruna, who asks while giggling, dispassionately.

“I came to steal a very important thing of Izaya’s that is here. That’s all.”

Then Haruna slightly narrows her eyes and mutters.

“….How serious are you about that? For the time being, today, I am in charge of the ‘luggage’, you know?”

“I deceived you by saying, 'Izaya told me to come here’ and left with the head. You can say something like that.”

Haruna asks Manami, who easily said that, with her lips distorted widely after she opened her mouth for one second.

“Ha… What’s in it for me?”

Likewise, Manami answered the question that was natural enough without hesitation.

“If you don’t need to be charge of it, you can have more time, right?”

“….”

“You can have more time to search for a person, can’t you?”

That was certainly an ideal deal for Haruna.

Orihara Izaya had been consuming most of Haruna’s time by making her a “luggage keeper”, except when he let her directly use “Saika”.

As if he does not want her to act freely.

“Okay. I’ll let you deceive me.”

“Yeah. ….Thanks, Haruna-chan.”

Haruna leaned towards the wall in the hallway slowly and did not answer Manami, who said thank you with a poker face, any further.

Naturally enough, in a normal company organization, you cannot use such an excuse.

You will end up being asked, “Why didn’t you directly call Izaya to make sure?”

However, that kind of common sense cannot be used by a group that Izaya gathered.

If Haruna says, “I just trusted the woman Izaya counted on and brought over,” they will accept it.

Or Izaya might possibly have dragged Manami into to his group knowing she would behave like this.

While she was thinking such things, Haruna saw Manami's behavior through to the end for a while.

A few minutes later.

Haruna started to get ready to go outside after she saw Manami off, who was leaving with the "luggage".

The reason why Haruna follows what Izaya says is because she wants to meet someone she loves.

Nasujima Takashi.

A man who once was her teacher but had a deeper relationship than that.

I have to tell my beloved person about my love quickly.

——Takashi…….

As she remembers the older man's large back, she thinks.

She wants to stab the sword that is proof of her love into that back.

The masculine neck and collarbones and sparkling eyes and smooth fingers for a guy.

To tell my love through "Saika" by stabbing my sword over and over.

Then Haruna will let her beloved man, whose eyes will have became red, hold the sword and gouge her body this time.

Through the sword called "Saika", we will pour "love" to each other.

The scene could not be anything but horrifyingly killing each other to the eyes of a third party, but to Haruna, that is the shape of love that other people cannot make.

Haruna's whole body became hot and she went to the bathroom and washed her face with cold water; maybe she was excited by just imagining it.

——No, not yet. I have to save the pleasure until the end.

She slowly leaves her house with a sick looking smile on her refreshed face.

In order to achieve what she wants to do now that she has freedom for the first time in a while.

In order to find someone who she is eager to meet among the crowd of the city.

Part 9

Raira General Hospital

On the other hand, the owner of the body of “Saika” that opposed Izaya finds herself in a situation where she can’t move even one step.

——This person…. *is not normal*.

——I have to cut this person right now!

——If I don’t, Ryuugamine-kun! Kida-kun!

Although Anri shouted it in her mind, she cannot step forward to do so.

She is afraid.

She’s afraid of Izaya’s composure that causes him to keep smiling in such a close distance despite knowing her power.

She’s afraid that he might be hiding something that could stop her actions like the time he tried to shoot the people around him with a gun.

At the same time, the question, “Is it really okay to cut this guy?” popped up in her mind.

It’s not like Saika’s control is absolute.

There are some people like Niekawa Haruna who oppress Saika’s “words of love” and deny the fact that they are a “child” of Saika.

If we were to describe it positively, we can say that “she’s become human again” or she “won over” the abnormal monster’s control, but the problem is there is a

possibility that she might take advantage of the power of Saika for herself.

Saika's feelings of love towards people are very pure.

But what will happen if a human's desire is added to that "power of love?"

On top of that, what will happen if a human like Orihara Izaya were to gain that power?

The more she thought about it, the more she couldn't make the sword appear carelessly.

She didn't notice that she had already fallen for Izaya's trap.

"Anri-chan, are you okay?"

It was Karisawa who asked Anri.

She probably asked her because she sees the sweat on Anri's cheeks.

Karisawa doesn't say anything to Izaya.

She probably isn't sure whether she should get involved in the problem between Anri and Izaya.

"…."

Izaya sighed lightly and asked Anri, who barely responded to Karisawa, maybe because she was nervous, in a light tone.

"Do you think I'm crazy?"

"….Yes."

She could answer him easily.

Anri could not distinguish the difference between sanity and insanity, but she nodded, following her instincts.

Izaya smiled bitterly while looking down a little and looked at Anri with slightly scornful eyes.

"I can say the same to the black bike, but with what authority can monsters like you guys tell humans like me that I'm crazy?"

"…."

"You can't possibly *still think that you're human, right?*"

"….!"

His remarks were surprising to Anri.

"First of all, do you have any right to accuse me? Everything started with your Japanese sword, Saika, you know? The cause was certainly Niekawa Haruna so it wouldn't be right to ask you to take responsibility for that. Having said that, you could have avoided this trouble."

——Huh?

——Me… how come?

She was about to accuse Orihara Izaya, but somehow instead she's being criticized by Izaya.

She didn't understand the situation and Anri's mind was upset by Izaya's words that stabbed at her.

"So you put distance between yourself and Ryuugamine Mikado and Kida Masaomi. Am I right? You devoted yourself to waiting for them. There are people around you who like you. You've been spoiling yourself with the situation and haven't been doing anything. You could have done more."

"No…."

Anri stops talking right then.

She could not deny Izaya's words completely.

Could it possibly be true?

She started to worry after the things she has never thought about before were pointed out by Izaya.

Izaya sees the slight anger in Anri's eyes and keeps talking.

"If I were to be extreme, you should have cut Ryuugamine Mikado and Kida Masaomi by using Saika. Then you should have let them expose everything in their hearts."

"No…. you're wrong! That is not true!"

Anri raises her voice unexpectedly.

A patient who was in the back of the corridor looked their way for a second but they probably thought they were a couple having a fight after they saw Izaya and Anri together and looked away without paying any particular attention to it.

Whether Izaya is aware of the atmosphere around them or not, he keeps talking in a manner as if he is trying to calm down Anri who is mad.

“That certainly might be morally wrong for a human. And more than that, it might not be something that a human can manage to do.”

“Then….”

“But you’re not human, right?”

“….!”

Izaya asserted it again.

Anri felt her lips and throat shaking in response to his words.

When they fought in Shinjuku, he had said, “I will not be beaten by just a sword —“ and she thought those words were about “Saika” who was a parasite to Anri.

However, she finally confirms it at this point.

He asserted that the existence of Sonohara Anri is “not human”.

Anri herself was aware of the fact that she was not a normal human.

Therefore she was longing to be like Celty who lives her life openly while being an abnormal creature and she made up her mind to live her life positively.

So how come this man’s words hurt her so much?

“You’re different from Niekawa Haruna. You’re not trying to overcome Saika by oppressing it. You admitted that you’re a human and wish to become one with Saika.”

She thinks about the reason and understands right away.

There was *clear hatred and scorn* in Izaya's words.

"What is making me irritated is that a monster like you who disregards being a human is pretending to be troubled like a human would."

The expression on his face was a smile that hadn't changed from before.

However, from Anri's point of view, his words held clear malice in order to push her over the edge.

"If I were to use the example of the cliff that I used earlier, your position is in a safe and special seat in the audience. Although you're in a safe place, you're whispering to the people around you, 'Hey, we're in danger" and 'Can anyone help them?' Then you will probably be the one who acts like the biggest victim while those two are falling off the cliff."

"No.…I…. don't…"

Although she tried to deny it, her words were delivered not only to Izaya but to herself.

"There is no bad guy in this incident. Ryuugamine-kun and Kida-kun knew it was dangerous but they voluntarily stepped on top of the rope. So even though there is no offender, you will probably keep saying you're a victim. When there are many ways you could save them."

"No! I…."

"So you're saying you can save those two? You're saying you would save the dignity of humans by using the power of a monster? Ah, I don't know about Kida-kun, but Mikado-kun will be happy. He may actually start to worship you."

Before Anri could deny what he said, Izaya quickly denies her next level of "denial" and pushes her mind over the edge.

Then he said something important as if it were the final stab.

"Let me tell you something, Sonohara Anri, Ryuugamine Mikado-kun and Kida Masaomi-kun are certainly in some kind of danger just like you're worried about. It's a much more dangerous situation than walking on the rope that we have imagined before."

"Huh…"

"I will stir it up even more. But you can't do anything. Well, you probably don't want to do anything."

"That's not…."

The red light has already disappeared from the eyes of Anri, who shakes her head.

Instead, Anri was trying to say something while tears filled up her eyes lightly.

However, before she could, Izaya attacks her with more words.

As if he is chanting a spell that can trap Anri, who is not a human, in a barrier.

"That's true. Because you never shouted even once when I was talking about them walking on the rope and such before. You didn't say, 'Is Mikado-kun doing such a dangerous thing!'"

"….!"

“If you were a normal human, before thinking if I’m insane or not, you’d worry about that part, you know? That’s common sense. Instead of the safety of your important friends, all you’re thinking about is yourself——“

Bang.

Part 10

The sound that resembled a dry gun shot echoed and Izaya's words were forcefully interrupted.

The hospital workers who were in their sight were looking around to see what was happening.

Anri and Izaya, who were nearby, knew what the sound was right away.

Karisawa took out a large sized paper advertising a doujinshi sale fair, folded it into a giant paper gun, and swung it down with full force.

Before the nurses could find it, Karisawa hid it in her bag quickly and talked to Izaya while smiling.

"Izaya."

This time, she didn't call him Izaiza but Izaya, and Izaya quietly responds.

"….What is it, Karisawa-san?"

"If you make my cute friend cry, *I will weld both of your eyelids shut with a soldering iron.*"

She gave him a clear, pure smile.

Her smile was telling him that her words weren't a threat but a pure fact.

Although Izaya was quiet for a while, he was processing Karisawa's words and smile, but soon after he speaks cheerfully, putting on his usual bitter smile.

"I love this side of Karisawa-san as a human being as well. I respect you even

though you're protecting a monster."

"Oh? Thanks. But I won't forgive you, you know?"

"Well well, even though I haven't said enough yet but I will withdraw to show respect to you, Karisawa-san. It's about time I have to go to the neurosurgical department."

"Oh, you should get a complete check up then. Your brain might be shaped like the face a fox, you know?"

He replied while shrugging his shoulders again in response to Karisawa.

"Well, I'll let you know if I find out anything about the guy who hit Dotachin. It would be great if you could tell him that Izaya came to visit him and said hello to him when he wakes up."

Without saying anything, Karisawa looked at Izaya's back as he left from there while saying such things.

Then she realizes that someone is grabbing the edge of her clothes as Izaya disappears at the corner of the hall.

When she looked back, Anri was standing there while looking downwards and shaking her hands.

"Karisawa-san…. I… I…."

It's more accurate to say that she was shocked than to say she was about to cry.

Karisawa held the body of the girl who probably didn't know what to say tightly.

"Ah…"

It was not her usual sexual harassment type of hug, but more like a warm embrace.

“That’s okay, don’t worry about it.”

Anri mutters as if she is groaning while resting her face on the collarbone of Karisawa, who says sweet words to her.

“But, but, I… really….”

“That was Izaya’s strategy. It’s like an interrogation. He was just saying something that would make you confused, Anri-chan. If you start feeling like what he was saying is right, that’s delusional, you know? It’s like he is preaching to trick you.”

“Karisawa-san…. But… I… just now was seriously trying to cut that person….”

“That’s okay, that’s okay. You can tell me the details later on.”

Karisawa said sweet words to Anri while patting her back.

“I don’t know the details, but I’ll forgive you for everything only now. So even if you were an ancient evil god and once destroyed the earth in the past, I’ll still forgive you, Anri-chan.”

Although her words didn’t sound like normal comforting words at all, to Anri, it was exactly what she needed to hear.

“…..”

But Anri couldn’t even say thank you and just faced the weakness of her mind.

At the same time, she fears herself.

At the same time as Izaya disappeared at the corner of the hall, the voice of Saika started to echo in her again.

The voice of Saika that echoed constantly was about to make even Karisawa, who was nice to her, a target of its “sword of love”.

Although she can now suppress Saika with her own will, but what if, what if she had cut Karisawa? What if she had given into Saika’s desires?

Thinking about this painted her mind with the colour of fear.

——You are a monster.

Izaya’s words that sounded as if he were convicting Anri now stabbed deeply into her.

Not only that, but what that man said was all true.

Although Karisawa said not to worry about it, it’s probably true because she can’t rebut it.

The confused Anri was about to believe so.

If Karisawa didn’t tell her, “I will forgive you,” she would have done something else.

While Anri was thankful for the woman named Karisawa from the bottom of her heart——

She felt a feeling of self hatred that she has never felt before to this extent.

She realized that, even now, she cannot chose to throw Saika away.

She understood that she really transformed into something non human.

The reason why she kept saying that she didn’t mind being a parasite——

Was just an excuse to look away from herself.

♂♀